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SPEECHES AND ADDRESSES
OF
RAJA PRAFULLA NATH TAGORE

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OF
RAJA PRAFULLA NATH TAGORE

WITH A
FOREWORD BY
SIR BROJENDRA LAL MITTER K.C.S.I.

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FOREWORD.

Raja Prafulla Nath Tagore is an enlightened Zemindar. He belongs to a family which has played a conspicuous part in the cultural development of Bengal. He himself has, from his youth, been a generous patron of the arts, literature and sports of the province. His excursions into the field of politics have been few, but important. The views of such a man on diverse topics which have engaged the thoughts and activities of Bengal during recent years deserve attention. We are face to face with a school of thought which wants the abolition of the land revenue system inaugurated by Lord Cornwallis a century and half ago. Raja Prafulla Nath's views constitute a valuable contribution to the discussion of the problem. It is hoped that the Raja will take a leading part in the experiment of parliamentary government about to be launched in India. A collection of his Speeches and Addresses at this time will be an attractive and welcome addition to the library of every cultured gentleman in Bengal.

B. L. MITTER.

5, OUTRAM STREET,
Calcutta, 1-9-36.

PREFACE

In presenting this small volume of collection of the speeches and addresses of Raja Prafulla Nath Tagore to the Zemindar community and the general public I make no apology, for, it is believed, that they form a perfect compendium of what the outlook of the landed gentry in India, and Bengal in particular, ought to be in politics, and in social and educational questions under modern conditions. The speeches such as they are may not be judged to be eloquent in respect of verbal felicity. Of verbal adornment and literary excellence their may not be, in them, many traces, but they are speeches which ought to have been heard when delivered and now read as vehicles of argument rather than a medium of literary expression.

As a public man I have never known Raja Prafulla Nath Tagore to be possessed of the imagery of Radha Kanta Deb, or the literary inspiration and the classical periods of a Rajendra Lala Mitra, but his public utterances have a value all their own for lucidity of argument, marshalling of facts and above all the personality of the speaker. Rare ability is to be discerned in the dexterity with which he puts his points and wins the hearts of groups of men. Subtlety of mind, charm of address, calmness of outlook and firmness, above all transparent sincerity with which the Raja is endowed in a pre-eminent degree, are the conspicuous qualities which are characteristic of the

speeches and addresses collected in the following pages, but, for all that the Raja is a democrat. He believes in government in the interest of the people, and even in government delegated from the people. But the exercise of his talents as disclosed in the speeches has not depended upon the accident of what might have been,—his having been born in a democratic family and a democratic community. He has the instincts of a democrat all the same, the true instincts of a sober sensible democrat.

BHUPENDRO KRISHNA GHOSE.

46, PATHURIAGHATA STREET,
Calcutta, Sept. 30th, 1936.

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A BRIEF SKETCH OF
RAJA PRAFULLA NATH TAGORE'S PUBLIC LIFE

Raja Prafulla Nath Tagore descends from a family of great distinction and respectability in Calcutta, and was born on the 10th of November 1887. Though born with a golden spoon in his mouth he was peculiarly unfortunate in having lost both his parents in his infancy. He lost his father Saradindra Mohan Tagore, the eldest son of Cally Kissen Tagore when he was four years old and his mother when he was about fourteen years old. To Cally Kissen therefore, the bereaved grandfather was entrusted the onerous charge of having to bring up a boy delicate in health but who gave early indications of determinedness of character. Broken-hearted, yet firm in purpose and confident in the future of his grandchild to whom he was going to leave a considerable fortune comprised in his immense zemindaries, substantial Calcutta properties and other revenue-earning investments of no mean proportions. Cally Kissen Tagore resolved to carry out the mission which Fate had assigned to him.

In his infancy Prafulla Nath was weak in build and constitution, so much so that his grandfather never ventured to place him in a school nor allow heavy studies to be imposed upon him lest he should break down. He was made therefore, to pursue his studies at home, under private tutors, some of whom have been men of remarkable character and erudition who have left an undying reputation for themselves whether as

models of character and devotion, or as outstanding figures in the literature of the land. Two such names strike us as deserving of special mention as giving an early turn to the nature and character of Prafulla Nath which later developed into geniality and sincerity rare in men occupying high station in life. They are Babu Jogendra Nath Bose, the biographer of Michael Madhu Sudhan Dutt and author of two notable epics "Sivaji" and "Prithiraj", and Babu Mahendra Nath Gupta the famous Headmaster, but better known as the disciple of Sri Ram Krishna Paramhansa, familiar to the world of devotees as श्री'म'. Needless to say, that if such men, who, by their life and work have moved the age, could not build up a Prafulla Nath, the perfect example of geniality, sincerity and large-heartedness, such as we know him today, none else could. They left their impress upon Prafulla Nath in whom resoluteness of character moreover makes a happy blend with kindliness of disposition and nobility of purpose.

Cally Kissen was, however shrewd in his purpose and wise in his methods. Both in the interest of the health and the up-building of the character of his grandchild he decided to give the boy the closest association with himself, and that in sanatoria and health resorts, such as Dehra Dun, Mussoori, Simla, Benares, Hazaribagh etc. as much as possible, to enable him to imbibe the best education that extensive travel can give, to recoup his health, and perhaps also to keep him from falling a prey to the influences of that association and company to which scions of noble and rich families invariably fall a victim. Prafulla

Nath spent years in this way and notwithstanding the many disadvantages which constant moving about entailed, he showed proficiency in his studies, to two particular departments of which he paid unusual attention, namely, to History and Politics. He loved to construe an author not in the ordinary way, but after reading a passage of some length in the original, he endeavoured to turn it at once into regular English sentences aiming to give the ideas with great exactness, and to express himself, at the same time, with idiomatic accuracy and ease. Such a course was admirably adapted for the formation of a style of his own, such as we have in the speeches collected here. They are distinguished at once for copiousness, force and elegance.

How far Cally Kissen contributed by direct instruction to form the mind and habits of his grandson, it is difficult to say; but that he inspired him with his lofty and generous sentiments; that he set integrity, truth and public spirit before him as the best means of success even in politics; that he warned him against that fashionable dissipation which has proved ruin to many a young Bengali nobility; that he made him feel intensely the importance of acquiring a character; all these are obvious from the model we have before us.

With his membership of the British Indian Association in the year 1909 began really the public life of Raja Prafulla Nath Tagore, and it is with that part of his life that we are concerned. Politics which had been the passion of his early life began to interest him, so that he seldom missed an opportunity

to come into close touch and contact with the best minds in the country, whether as a prominent member of the Indian Association, or of the British Indian Association. By reason, however, of the fact that he himself had descended from the landed aristocracy of Bengal, the politics of the British Indian Association interested him more than anything else. But he could not cast aside his democratic views and sentiments, imbibed from a grandfather whose instincts were democratic and nationalistic to a degree, traces of which are to be found in his speeches and addresses, in the delivery of which he made no attempts to dazzle by any elaborate display of eloquence,—for he never believed in making set speeches. It was in the British Indian Association that Raja Prafulla Nath gradually developed his powers until they all looked to him to take part almost in every important discussion. He thus gradually rose to be a dexterous and effective speaker among the great landed magnates of Bengal.

Long years of probation prepared Raja Prafulla Nath for a more active part in the organisation of the British Indian Association. He made himself indispensable, or else, unasked and unsolicited, he would never have been elected to their Secretarial Chair in 1928,—a chair which had been occupied in the past by such eminent men and outstanding personalities as Maharshi Debendra Nath Tagore, Maharaja Jotendra Mohan Tagore, Babu Kristo Das Pal, Raja Peary Mohun Mookerjee, Babu Isswar Chandra Mittra, Raja Resheekesh Law and last but not the least Sir Provash Chandra Mitter. It was as Secretary of

the British Indian Association that Raja Prafulla Nath came into prominence as a public man, who, having everything in his favour had a great future whether in the Senate or on the platform. This Association of the Zemindars of Bengal which had for a considerable time past been in the bad books of the people of the country, and had lost all sympathy and touch with them, was what Prafulla Nath made up his mind to resuscitate with the help of other brother Zemindars, influential and cultured as he. The sympathy, support and co-operation that he drew from his brother zemindars, young and old, large and small in his effort to reinstate the British Indian on that high pedestal, that high State, which had been its glory in the past, were remarkable and indicate the reserve vitality this body of the landed aristocracy of Bengal still possesses. It has only to be brought out and utilised for national purposes. This is an ambition which he has always cherished in his heart in realisation of which he would remind his brother zemindars that,

“It will be sheer folly on our part not to take note of the changes that we find around us,—changes in the social sphere, in the political field and in the region of economics. We have got to adjust ourselves to varying circumstances, and map out a programme of work for our own welfare and in our own interest.”

And this principle found eloquent expression from Raja Prafulla Nath over and over again in his speeches and addresses which are collected here.

It will be within the memory of all that during the period of his Secretaryship, the British Indian Association once more grew to be a body which was neither moribund nor atrophied, but was alive to a sense of high responsibility in the cause of the people of the country.

In Bengal, at any rate, the people are divided into two main classifications. Landlords and tenants. Upon their combination he has always insisted with force, courage and conviction :—

“ There is no doubt”, said he to the members of the British Indian Association in March, 1935, “about the wisdom, nay, the necessity of landlords and tenants combining with each other. Both have vested interests which should not be permitted to be exploited by agitators. It would be on our part, a wise policy to identify ourselves with our tenants to resist the tide of communism which is slowly but surely spreading in our country. All interests connected with land should be united into one whole. I should like to see the Agricultural party to stand firm for the preservation of the interests of land, just as much as I should like to see the landholders come out in the open and indentify themselves with their tenants. They can no longer afford to remain mere observers of events. If they cannot do this, they must either retire or be retired. It is for us to explore the causes of our tenants’ grievances, if any, and find the remedy.”

It is a bold statement worthy of any political leader and coming as it did from one every fibre of whose being was instinct with landlordism as a tradition, a family tradition extending over five generations, created a stir in the dovecot, but it served to help the zemindars of Bengal to revise their notions of their own position in the body politic. Raja Prafulla Nath was the first among zemindars to declare that the community to which he belonged was a part of that body politic and not apart from it. As Secretary to the British Indian Association, Prafulla Nath organised the All-India Landholders' deputation which waited upon His Excellency the Viceroy at Simla, in July 1929, to represent to the authorities the grievous political injustice which was proposed to be done to his countrymen by the recommendations of the Simon Commission, before which the evidence led by the Committee of the British Indian Association of which he was a prominent member was bold and convincing, such as would do credit to any body holding advanced political views. The Memorial, which the All-India Landholders submitted to Lord Irwin is said, in some quarters, to be a masterpiece of political foresight and advocacy, on behalf of the people of his country. That memorial was, it is not known to many, really the handiwork of Raja Prafulla Nath Tagore. In this connection it is worth-noting that no small share of the credit of the campaign which was carried on behalf of the landholders of Bengal, for separate seats allotted to them, is due to the efforts and resourcefulness of the Raja whose popularity and sober views have always been regarded and reckoned as assets in their

favour, even when they carried their contention, founded as it was upon logic and justice, to the Round Table Conference.

But it was as President of the British Indian Association, to which high office he was called after three years' tenure of office as Secretary in the year 1932, was really the crowning period of Prafulla Nath's hitherto brief but important political career for, in that short space of 3 years were crowded the significant campaign he carried on against the *exparte* Communal decision, called 'award', of Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, the educative propaganda he initiated on behalf of the landlords to counter misrepresentation in the country through the medium of informed literature on the problem of their rights and liabilities, the bringing into life the organisation of the annual All-Bengal Landholders' Conference for the exchange of ideas on problems affecting the relations of landlords and tenants, and the welfare of the tenantry in particular and to evolve co-ordinated action among them.

It was a true lead on what is called the Communal Award which the Raja gave to his countrymen when he said,

"Gentlemen, the joint Committee has done India a distinct desservice by adhering to the communal allocation, wrongly named 'award' with a view to giving it a solemnity which it does not deserve. It is not an award. It never was, as my esteemed friend Sir N. N. Sircar, now the legal member of the Governor-General's Executive Council, has proved beyond doubt and cavil. It was Mr. Ramsay

Macdonald's gift to those who never wanted it. It is his contribution to high politics and higher statesmanship which suggests, and in fact establishes, the protection, further protection for those who are protected by numbers, overprotected by weightage, and of sacrifice of those who are unprotected chiefly by lack of numbers and for want of weightage, the legitimate due of every class of minority, whose views as to their union with or separation from the majority ought, from every point of view, moral or political, to be supreme. Gentlemen, we fully appreciate and support the claim for reservation of seats for our Muslim brothers where they are in a minority. But I fail to realise the propriety and equity of a majority community such as our brothers are in Bengal, and in the Punjab, agitating for protection by reservation. Judged by any standard, reservation for a majority is indefensible in theory. This artificial restriction is, to say the least of it, a dead weight on the growth of the majority and the minority. It stands to retard national progress."

It is indeed refreshing to think that Bengal aristocracy which in years past produced such fearless political leaders as Radha Kanta Deb, Narendra Krishna Deb, Rajendra Lala Mitra, Digumbar Mitter, Jotendra Mohan Tagore and Peary Mohan Mookerjee has not yet gone bankrupt either in leadership or in statesmanship.

As President of the British Indian Association, Prafulla Nath was bold enough to deliver some of the most important speeches suggesting the regulating of relationship between landlord and tenant ever delivered by anybody in Bengal, or for that matter in India, whether a Zemindar or non-Zemindar. As President of the British Indian Association Profulla Nath gave expression to his feelings of high approval and appreciation that the tenant must no longer be treated as one's goods and chattels, but must be invited to discuss measures of welfare for themselves and give and take counsel.

The nationalist press hailed Prafulla Nath as the coming Messiah of the tenantry in Bengal. The Zemindar Community, the great majority of whom had not yet cast off their narrow vision, looked askance, and even chagrined, but tolerated everything that came from Prafulla Nath, a most considerable Zemindar, who was above everything a gentleman in the real sense of the word. Raja Prafulla Nath's formulae of landlordism and his ideals are to be found in his speeches and addresses and we make bold to suggest that they will not suffer in comparison with the ideals set up or enunciated by anybody known to us. This was not all, for it was through his instrumentality as President of the British Indian Association that an educative propaganda was undertaken on behalf of the landlords to counter misrepresentation in the country through informed literature.

It was however as Chairman of the Anti-Terrorist Conference and of the Committee attached thereto that Raja Prafulla Nath Tagore has rendered a most

patriotic service to his country where, he felt, youngmen, otherwise valuable lives were being led astray by misconceived sentiments and misdirected patriotism. And here Raja Prafulla Nath struck the right chord when he observed at the anti-terrorist conference which was held in Calcutta in September 1934, that :—

“one of the first things which strikes me to be at the root of the problem is that, the system upon which our youths are educated is not what makes for a better type of citizen, in whom assassination or terrorism, or anything pertaining to it, must arouse a feeling of abhorrence. Education, which is not based upon religious or moral injunctions, has but little value in the actual building up of the character of our youths, to which I am constrained to observe with regret, the teachers of our educational institutions have hitherto contributed little or nothing. Gentlemen, if Richardson and Dérozio were great, if Vidyasagar and Peary Churn were distinguished, it is because they contributed a substantial share towards the building up of the character of men who played a prominent part in the history of our country, who built up the University, who built up the great colleges in and around Calcutta, who made the legal profession the highest ambition of success of every educated man in the country, who raised the medical profession to a pitch of high eminence, who made the science and

literature of Bengal renowned all over the world and created a public life second to none anywhere else in honour, integrity and ability."

Indeed when he said this he had the great stalwarts of his age in his mind. W. C. Bonnerjee and Rash Behary Ghose, Kali Churn Banurjee and Lal Mohan Ghose, Surendra Nath Banerjee and Bhupendra Nath Basu, the brothers Sisir Kumar Ghose and Mati Lal Ghose are names which would do credit and honour to the history of the political development of any country. Some of these he knew personally and intimately; others he had known as the friends and associates of his grandfather who preferred to stand in the background in all his activities, political or social and to remain anonymous in all his extensive generousities, educational and humanitarian.

It was Raja Prafulla Nath who made a bold first start in Bengal in co-operation with a few weighty men of sound but sober political views to carry on an intensive propaganda against violence and disruptive movements in any form, and for a reversal to constitutional methods of agitation which has been responsible through fifty years, for bringing India nearer the goal of her political aspiration than subversive means could. It is but a short step forward between the present constitutional arrangement and the ultimate goal. And to bring back his misdirected countrymen to saner views Raja Prafulla Nath, it will be remembered, has been unstinted in placing both his services and his purse at the disposal of the Committee who, from all reports, are rendering excellent patriotic service to the

country whose honour he felt bound to exert himself to the utmost to redeem by his unremitting devotion even against the direction of his medical advisers.

But it was as the champion of the native Bengalee cause that Raja Prafulla Nath deserves our highest commendation. The unanswerable arguments which he employed in establishing the Bengalee Cause is indicative of the great patriotism of one whose one desire is not to let his country, his native land, be converted into a dumping ground of non-descripts and exploiting ground of adventurers from other parts of India. The bold utterances made him unpopular with a section of his friends who were non-Bengalees, and they were a legion. But the frowns or favours of the foes and friends never troubled him. His one passion was to reinstate Bengal in its former pre-eminence, whether in politics, or in literature, in Science or in Industry, and above all in its desire for self-development and self-realisation.

SPEECHES AND ADDRESSES OF RAJA PRAFULLA NATH TAGORE (POLITICAL)

**Presidential Address at the Annual General Meeting of the
British Indian Association,
March 30, 1932.**

BROTHER MEMBERS OF THE
BRITISH INDIAN ASSOCIATION,

I speak no language of convention when I say that I cannot adequately express my thankfulness to you for having elected me to this chair, a chair which has been occupied in the past by persons, far worthier than myself. When I think of the great galaxy of eminent men, not only in your own class, the landlord class, but in the country at large, who have preceded me in this chair, I feel a sense of personal inferiority to any one of those names, such as, Raja Radhakanta Dev, Raja Rajendra Lala Mitra, Maharaja Durga Churn Law, Raja Digumber Mitter and Raja Peary Mohan Mukherjee, to name only a few among that host. But gentlemen, I cannot disguise from you a sense of pride which I feel in being called upon to occupy this chair for the year before us. Unworthy though I am, it has pleased you to nominate me, to this office, to continue the fifth generation of Presidents of the British Association from my family. Maharaja Ramanath Tagore, Babu Prosonna Kumar Tagore, Maharaja

Bahadur Sir Jotendra Mohan Tagore and Maharaja Bahadur Sir Prodyot Coomar Tagore, Kt. have, before me, had the honour to place their services at your disposal. This is a matter, gentlemen, of which I feel particularly proud that I should have the good fortune, by your suffrage, to contribute my humble share of services to your Association as the fifth member of my family. Gentlemen, I am grateful to you for the honour you have done me, and I consider no honour bestowed upon a zemindar higher than the Presidential chair of this Association which has had to its credit a glorious record of brilliant services, social and political, rendered to the country in the past.

Welcome to Sir John Anderson.

At the outset, it is my duty to offer His Excellency the Right Hon'ble Sir John Anderson, on your behalf, a respectful and cordial welcome to our province, where His Majesty's representatives will always find representatives of the ancient and historic houses of Bengal, whose loyalty to the person of the Sovereign and his Government has always been deep and abiding, ready to co-operate with his Government in any measure calculated to be for the good of the country and the community. And if, the landlords as a class are not neglected or ignored by the Government as they have recently been, I have no doubt that we shall find our rightful place of usefulness in the body politic. Sir John Anderson comes to bear upon the duties of his office 'an open mind' with a resolute determination to study the problems, some delicate, others complicated, for himself. In that endeavour, I am sure His

Excellency will take advantage of all available sources and materials, official and non-official, with a view to enable himself to solve them, and thus help this province to go forward without impediment to the goal of constitutional government to which the country is looking forward with eagerness. Let us hope, gentlemen, that His Excellency's term of office will be one of peace, and good-will, of prosperity and progress in the province.

Political Depression.

Gentlemen, I lay particular emphasis on Progress, for the political horizon at the present moment does not appear to me to be particularly encouraging or cheering. It presents difficulties, the solution of which, in my judgment, is not to be found in the mailed fist but in firm rule, tempered by genuine sympathy and irreproachable justice. We, in the British Indian Association, have always condemned terrorism in unmistakable language, and on your behalf and as your President, I repeat our condemnation of it with all the emphasis that I can command. Political reforms can come through constitutional means, and to be able to carry constitutional methods to success there must be really mutual and unstinted co-operation. These are some of the questions which press themselves upon our notice so that, it should be the duty of the Association to urge upon the Government, in a spirit of whole-hearted co-operation, to be scrupulous about the administration of emergency measures, the continuance of which can be cut short by bold, courageous and above all by resourceful and sympathetic statesman-

ship. To allow emergency measures to continue long on the Statute Book would be an injustice to the community, the perpetuation of which can never be the object of high statesmanship. I submit, therefore, that our co-operation and conduct should be such as to enhance our national honour and entitle us to demand of the Government to sponge out the disgrace from the Statute Book at the earliest opportunity. And, in order to attain progress, there must be peace in the country. Without peace there can be no progress, than which I cannot conceive of a more powerful energy to establish and maintain the very best relation between every member of the body politic, the Government with the people, the landlords with their tenantry, in fact one with the other, and everyone with the rest. Gentlemen, we rely upon progress as a most effective solvent of all ills, political and otherwise.

Constitutional reforms.

The problem of constitutional reforms looms very large before the country at the present moment, and, I cannot imagine that there exists a landlord in the whole of Bengal, whether a member of the British Indian Association or not, who is not vitally interested in the Reforms which shall be discussed threadbare during the coming year before they are granted to us. But, gentlemen, I feel that I voice your opinion when I say that the Reforms, however liberal they may be, will not have either our sympathy or our ready acceptance, if they are found wanting in what we have before now urged upon the Government, both of Bengal and of India, over and over again. The landlords of Bengal

will never be satisfied so long as their interests, as that of any other community or special class is not allowed to have a separate representation of their own; they have also suggested the inauguration of a second chamber in Bengal, and in this, I venture to think that we are in association with the more advanced opinion of our countrymen.

Delay is dangerous, defeat worse.

Gentlemen, it is being freely talked about by responsible and irresponsible persons, beginning with the damaging disclosure made in the press of the tactics of a certain section of people, you need not be told of mushroom origin, down to the latest ingenious pronouncement on the serene heights of Darjeeling that the constitutional reforms, in which I include reforms at the centre, envisaged and promised on behalf of the National Government by the Prime Minister, are to be skilfully planned to be delayed or defeated. I cannot believe that to be the intention of the authorities, but if they allow themselves to be influenced by those who have no stake in the country, or whose stake is only temporary, or whose stake is in proportion to the amount of special and exclusive privileges they have, or whose stake has vanished altogether, then I say, that our political horizon is and will continue to be overcast. Gentlemen, these people may be short-sighted, but not those who are there to give an account of their stewardship, nor those on whom rests the responsibility for the wise management of the affairs of the Empire. They will be found to be least responsive to the tactics of those whose credential is

that they represent but a small minority even of their own community, and perhaps not the best of them to work with whom is always a pleasure and a gain to the country. If only they could imbue themselves with the spirit and statesmanlike outlook of His Excellency Lord Willingdon, who, leave alone his earlier pronouncements expressive of his intense desire to initiate the reforms at the earliest possible opportunity, only the other day assured the Talukdars of Oudh that, "My Government and I are determined to introduce the constitutional reforms as rapidly as possible in order to bring India to her rightful position amongst the Dominions of the Empire," they would, like him, insist upon the reforms being pushed forward with expedition and honesty.

Our activities.

When I urge these points upon your attention I begin to feel that we, as a class, have now realised that mere representation to the Government and laying down of our claims is not enough, and will do us no good. Having regard to His Excellency the Viceroy's utterances that, "you would not, I am sure, expect me to give any guarantee against the introduction of legislation, landlords might hold to be prejudicial to them and unduly favourable to tenants," we must no longer be under any delusion that we, the permanently settled zemindars, shall be more generously treated. It is incumbent upon us, therefore, to strain every nerve to educate public opinion, and the opinion of our tenantry who have for more than a century lived happily under conditions which sanctioned no change of assessment

by the authorities. But gentlemen, remember that whatever you do, your action will be watched with keen interest by the people of whom you only form one part—a small part, numerically, but nonetheless influential, culturally and socially. It will not do to look at them or at the problems which affect you all with an olympic attitude from an olympic platform. I have asked you more than once in this Hall to make common cause with your countrymen if you do not want to be swamped out or brushed aside. If you want to maintain your station in the body politic as that of natural leaders, you will revise the situation, and the sooner you do it the better, consistent of course, with the preservation of your own interest. The landholders of Bengal are a body whose patriotic instincts, no less powerful than those of other communities, whether in the past or in the present, will undoubtedly help to dissipate any adverse opinion that might have been created against them in some quarters,—quarters where there is either lack of *bona-fide* or want of sympathy. Our watchword is co-operation and we are always guided by a co-operative spirit with the Government on the one hand and with our own people on the other. It was only a fortnight ago that His Excellency the Viceroy in addressing the Talukdars of Oudh said that, “in my opinion you will start under the new constitution with the very great advantages of your prestige, your resources and the tradition and habit in your Estates of centres of obedience to your authority. If you utilise these advantages to the full, you can confirm and strengthen your position by proving your value to the tenantry. For your future well-being you

should trust rather to retaining the esteem and affection of your tenants than to extraneous aid of a constitutional form, which is liable, as all other human institutions, to change and dissolution. Let me impress upon you that your interests can best be preserved by fostering happy and sympathetic relations, with your tenants, whose interests as you rightly say, are identical with your own. I trust you will all take an active part in the management of your Estates, move amongst your tenants and appreciate their difficulties. Then you will be able not only to withstand the attacks of agitators, but to ensure for yourselves an unassailable position."

Solution of the problem.

I cannot impress this lesson too strongly upon you. Herein lies the solution of a great problem. Herein lies the dissipation of all calumnies against us. There is no doubt that you will be able to maintain your position of legitimate and rightful advantage if you organise yourselves, organise yourselves so as to occupy the hearts of your people and secure, as the Viceroy said, "a real and effective voice in the new legislature and a strong position in the new administration." The last, I am confident, will follow as a corollary to the first. By organisation I do not mean simply the organisation of the British Indian Association, but the organisation of the larger body of landholders in the province, many, perhaps most of whom are not members of this body at all. Organise yourselves so as to make one united body whose interests are identical and whose dangers are common. Gentle-

men, united we stand, and whatever personal differences there may be among some of us, let us not carry them to influence, one way or the other, the work of self-preservation. Rest assured, if one of us is hit the whole body must pain or ache. When I say this I do not for a moment suggest that you should dissociate yourselves with the rest of your countrymen whose interests can be no other than yours. Organise therefore, so as to let them feel that you are of them as much as they are of you and that, there is no conflict between your interests and their interests, for both are placed upon the high ideal, not of self-interest, but of the greatest good of the greatest number. The organisation to be effective, must be active without the slightest intention of allowing vocal people to get the better of us. Gentlemen, while vocal people have been sedulously endeavouring to create a prejudice against us we have been scrupulously silent and have allowed judgment to be recorded against us, as it were by default. As we must now move to set it aside, so we should be reluctant to condone any negligence or laches on the part of our own friends to allow judgment to go against us *ex parte* and without protest. In this connection, however, there is one point which ought to be noted with satisfaction,—the establishment of a number of sister institutions in the different parts of the province, ready to and actually doing useful work on behalf of the community to which we belong. These ought to be helped to strengthen themselves and consolidate so as to render it possible for us all to meet and confer in the near future on subjects of vital interests to the community of landlords in Bengal to

whose service the British Indian Association and its sister, the Bengal Landholders' Association, have, with singular devotion, applied themselves.

Economic depression.

Gentlemen, nobody, rest assured, realises better than myself that we are passing through very hard and unhappy times, such as have not been experienced by anyone of you present here. There is no doubt that almost every man in the country has been hit hard. From what I know of the state of affairs in zemindaries all over Bengal I am disposed to think that we, as a class, have been hit harder. How disastrous the situation must be for us can be realised from the reports that appear almost every day in the papers, as to how many hundreds of estates in the province, large and small, are being put up to sale for failure to pay revenue kists in time. There are reports of their being similarly dealt with for default in payment of cesses, which, by inexorable rules are levied on them, leaving them to realise the tenants' share as rent or through the civil courts, who, in their turn consider it their sacred duty to put the landlord to every imaginable delay and difficulty. And if, this state of things continues for another year or two, I fear that zemindars, as a class, will be altogether an extinct race. They will be remembered more in history than contemporary records. The question naturally arises, —what are we to do in these circumstances? These are just the considerations that I want to press upon your attention this afternoon, and to beg you not to sleep over them, but to consider and come out, each

with your proposition and suggestions, as to how to save the situation and meet future contingencies in a spirit that should be noble and involve no loss of self-respect.

Gentlemen, I cannot close my address without uttering on your behalf a word of appreciation of the services rendered to your Association by my friend Kumar Surendra Nath Law with whom I have had the privilege of being associated during the past three years in your Secretariat. Nobody knows it better than I do, how anxious he has always been to serve you as best as he could and how devoted he is to the cause of the landlords. Gentlemen, Kumar Surendra Nath Law is an asset to the British Indian Association. Upon his cordial co-operation I shall continue to rely and you with me.

Gentlemen, before I resume my seat, I beg to offer you again my very sincere thanks for having called on me to preside over this Association during the coming year, and I hope that in the discharge of my duties I shall have encouragement and support from every one of you as I have hitherto received throughout the arduous period during which I have been one of your Secretaries,—from your Committee as from every one of you. On your behalf, gentlemen, I welcome the new Committee who, I have no doubt, will do their best to maintain and heighten the tradition of this Association.

**Death of Raja Gopendra Krishna Deb Bahadur of Sovabazar,
Speech delivered to move the resolution of condolence
Friday, Jan. 10, 1932, (B. I. Association.)**

GENTLEMEN,

We meet this evening to record our sincere grief over the death of one of our oldest members, a scion of an ancient family under the auspices of one of whose ancestor's this Association was started 80 years ago. Raja Gopendra Krishna Deb represented the Sova Bazar Raj family whose history is linked up with the history of the British Raj and, particularly with the history of Bengal. Gentlemen, in Raja Gopendra Krishna the British Indian Association has lost a valued member for nearly forty years and a wise counsel. Eldest surviving son of the late Maharaja Sir Narendrakrishna whom you had the privilege of honouring as your President eight times over, Raja Gopendrakrishna was an ornament of the community no less than of the service to which he belonged. Starting life in what was then known as the Statutory Civil Service as Joint Magistrate and Deputy Collector he soon rose to be a District and Sessions Judge in which capacity he gave evidence of courage and independence, tact and talent, worthy of the family of which he was a brilliant member. It was to the service of the State that he devoted his great talents and outstanding character and in serving the State he served his community and his people such as fall to the lot of few

amongst us. Gentle and quiet by nature, Raja Gopendra Krishna decided that the Judicial side of the public service suited his temper best and it was there that he shone as well as the best of them ; in the judicial service of the country. Gentlemen, from what I knew of him I always thought that he was shy, unassuming and unassertive or else, with his abilities and his family connections and influence it would not have been at all difficult for him to end his career on the bench of the High Court and that in a way worthy of the best traditions of the judiciary in India. He, however, would not stay in the service a day longer after he had earned his pension. He had latterly been in failing health, but whoever among you had the good fortune to meet him could not have failed to notice in him that age-old courtesy, affability and cordiality, for which the true Bengalee aristocrat is ever noted. But Raja Gopendra Krishna was more than that. He was an aristocrat and a democrat, if I may use the expression which may appear to you contradictory. He was an aristocrat by birth and a democrat by instinct, as a result of high and finished culture which should serve as an example to all of us. On top of all this it was a rare combination that he made of the old and the new. True to the traditions and customs of his forefathers he was not blind to the best that modern ideas produced. With all these assets in his favour he was unassertive and shy to a degree. But for his unflinching determination to lead the life, almost of a recluse, after his retirement from the public service, with his culture, his education, his experiences and above all his family traditions he might have been

able to rise to any height in the public life of the country. Gentlemen, you honoured him twice with the Vice Presidency of your Association but there was none amongst us who did not or would not feel that that was about the least the Association could do to honour a worthy representative of the house which gave us our first President, Raja Sir Radha Kanto Deb Bahadur, who continued in office for seventeen long years, followed twelve years later by his own father Maharaja Sir Narendra Krishna. It was a pleasure to talk to him and sit with him for an hour, enough to make you feel that you were in the presence of the living embodiment of all that was noble and enlightened and pure in this frail life of ours. Gentlemen, by his death the British Indian Association has lost an invaluable friend who added lustre and dignity to the Association, the traditions of which are in our keeping now. Gentlemen, it is upto us to honour the departed and offer condolence to his bereaved family. I move therefore for your acceptance that :—

“The British Indian Association deeply mourns the loss of Raja Gopendra Krishna Deb Bahadur of the Sovabazar Raj family at the ripe age of 82 who was for nearly forty years a valued member of the Association during a part of which he had been its Vice-President and in whose death the country has lost a highly cultured gentleman of noble instincts and remarkable ability. The Association offers heartfelt condolence to his bereaved family.”

**Speech delivered to Unveil the Portrait of Raja
Kissori Lal Goswami, (In the Rooms of the B. I. A.)
September 30, 1935.**

Gentlemen, the portrait which you have called upon me to unveil this afternoon is that of a very eminent Bengali gentleman, a scion of the distinguished Goswami family of Serampore, and at one time a familiar figure in these rooms. Raja Kissori Lal Goswami was for a whole generation a prominent figure in our society and in the public life of Bengal. Born with a golden spoon in his mouth, he had in his early life the best of education which he was determined to utilise to the best purpose, and lay at the service of his country. He was a Vakil of the High Court at an age when most people would be regarded as boys,—at 21. But life at the bar did not appeal to him for, he soon exchanged it for a life in the service of his fellow-men. He began his public life in the Calcutta Corporation which was then dominated by giants like Raja Rajendra Lala Mitra, Rev. K. M. Bannerjee and Babu Kristo Das Pal of the older generation, and Surendra Nath Bannerjee and N. N. Ghose and Narendra Nath Sen of the younger. An intense desire to devote his leisure to the service of his community early attracted him to the activities of civic life, and equipped as he was, with a culture and uncommon intelligence, he soon came to occupy an important

place in the body politic of Bengal. And, what I judge, helped him to gain that conspicuous position in the counsel of the province is the affability of his ways and the genuineness of his character, qualities with which he was endowed in a marked degree. Gentlemen, my personal recollection of him is small, but the records of your Association pay eloquent tribute to the signal services he ungrudgingly rendered to the landlords of Bengal, the community of which he was an honoured member and the community which was proud of him. His knowledge of the zemindari system was unique; his knowledge of the revenue system of Bengal was unrivalled, so that, in his days if there was any difficulty to appreciate the relationship between the landlord and tenant all eyes turned to him or to Maharaja Bahadur Sir Jotendra Mohan Tagore or to Raja Peary Mohan Mukherjee as the three authorities, of their generation, on such matters. That is not all, for, it is a certain knowledge with most of you present here that if there was another man than the late Sir Surendra Nath Bannerjee whose acquaintance with local self-government was of the most intimate character, it was that well-known figure now on the walls of these rooms. Raja Kissori Lal Goswami served his own Municipality of Serampore and the District Board of Hughli such as no other man has served before or since. A yet more remarkable feature of the experience of which he had a rich collection in him was his knowledge of the constitution and the administrative systems of many lands. In this he stood next to none. Perhaps this is a fact which is not known to many of you, but it is a fact to which his

immense library, the valuable collection of his books abundantly testifies. There was not a student of comparative politics, or of comparative constitutions in Calcutta who did not repair to him in his Elgin Road house, either to have his doubts elucidated, or to have a friendly discussion with him of constitutional problems. Into these discussions he always entered with a vivacity rare even among young minds, and upon these he brought to bear a knowledge which astounded ardent, devoted and lifelong students. He was at once a student and a teacher. A student in his own library in which he loved to live in the company of great minds on his shelves, in his own study, and a teacher to whosoever sought enlightenment from him. It was therefore, no wonder that Sir Edward Baker, who appreciated merit and valued industry more than perhaps any civilian of his time, should have selected him as the first Indian member of his Executive Council immediately upon its constitution. Whether in office or out of it, he was as suave as he had ever been, and never allowed that official stiffness to disfigure the gentle courtesy and politeness which endeared him to all with whom he came into contact. As a member of the Executive Council he proved himself invaluable to his Governor, and carried on the arduous duties of his office with a bearing which might well be said to have created a precedent for his successors to follow, and to take advantage of. Gentlemen, as such member he was a great success, such as convinced the authorities that the innovation thus introduced might, upon the raising of the province to the status of a Presidency Government, be perpetuated with

safety and profit. And now that the system has been enlarged, I venture to say that no small credit is due to him for it. Upon the success and wise management of affairs of the first incumbents of these offices always depend the continuation and perpetuation of a system introduced for the first time after 150 years of British Rule. Such was the man whose portrait, gentlemen, I am privileged to unveil this afternoon. Kissori Lal Goswami, in recognition of whose eminent public services the Government was pleased to confer upon him the title of "Raja", stands there to inspire us with courage, hope, and devotion to our country's cause, and to the cause of the landlords of Bengal. Gentlemen, let us pay our respectful homage to the memory of the man at whose feet we now stand, and of whom the British Indian Association is and shall always be proud. It is a misfortune that he is not in our midst today, to help us with his advice and to guide us to consolidate ourselves so as to come into our own as a class deserving of every consideration at the hands of the authorities.

Raja Kissori Lal Goswami was generous in his gift to the generation succeeding him. He left them a son, Kumar Tulsi Charan Goswami, whose education, culture and public spirit, in pursuit of the eminent career of his father, are an asset of which he is making proper use in the service of his country. We owe the portrait before us to his generosity, and on your behalf, I thank him for it. Gentlemen, his lavish entertainments to his guests have been proverbial and I shall be failing in duty if I do not on your

behalf sufficiently thank him for the very inviting refreshments which he has kept waiting for you. To that I expect, you propose to do justice.

**Presidential Address at the Golap Lal Ghose Memorial Meeting,
October, 16, 1932.**

GENTLEMEN,

We meet under the shadow of death. The passing away of a man, so wise, so considerate, so patriotic and with such keen political insight as Babu Golap Lal Ghose is a calamity,—a calamity for the Bengalees and for the Province of Bengal, at a juncture such as that through which we are passing. Notwithstanding all the political wisdom, importance and experience that he had acquired by his close and life-long association with his great brothers Sisir Kumar and Mati Lal, Golap Lal was unassuming and unassertive. But that was also the characteristic of the great brothers whose mantle had fallen upon his frail but worthy body. But gentlemen, the brothers Ghoses, Sisir Kumar, Mati Lal and Golap Lal, in proportion to the genius each possessed, must be said to have jointly contributed the largest share towards the political uplift of our race and generation. They were a land-mark in the history of our country. The ideas and imagination of Sisir Kumar are an asset, political as well as religious, to the Bengalee race.

Resourcefulness of Sisir Kumar.

His resourcefulness is a matter of history for, who does not know, or has not heard of how he thwarted, by perfectly legitimate means, the sinister

design of Lord Lytton to throttle the Vernacular press which was growing to be a power in the land. How upon the passing of the Vernacular Press Act at a sitting of what was then known as the Viceroy's Legislative Council one fine afternoon, perhaps over a cup of tea, a curb was put upon the liberty of the press, a privilege enjoyed by civilized countries all the world over, Sisir Kumar created history by converting his vernacular Amrita Bazar Patrika into an English paper overnight to escape the rigors of the Act which was both preventive and punitive. This was the earliest attempt on the part of the executive to curb the liberty of the press. What further progress has been made in that particular art of Government is known to you all. Sisir Kumar, gentlemen, was a born journalist, ready, facile and resourceful, the like of whom India has not seen before or since. Genius though he was, he was ably seconded by his brothers whose devotion to him was that of ardent and unquestioning *chelas* to their *Guru*.

The brothers Ghoses.

In themselves, Sisir Kumar's achievements were great; they were greater, larger and more numerous for they were supplemented by the services of his brothers Mati Lal and Golap Lal whose demise we have met here to mourn. Sisir Kumar was patriotic, but his highest genius lay in the fact that he imparted his patriotic fervour to all those by whom he was surrounded, and all those who made his acquaintance through the columns of the Patrika, an institution in the land. What fervour could be more patriotic and

loyal than the submission of Mati Lal, who was but a perfect mirror of Sisir Kumar, to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, now our King Emperor on the occasion of his visit to Calcutta. "Humble as I am", submitted the worthy brother, "I am greatly honoured by this interview. I shall ever remember it with gratitude. Now I am in the presence of our future King Emperor. Permit me to say that poor India is in a bad way. It needs protection at Your Royal Highness' hands, for you are our future sovereign. Pray, do not forget the Indians; and remember that they are as much yours as the forty millions of England. What they need most is the genuine sympathy of their rulers." Noble sentiments these are, and nobly expressed which drew forth a no less noble assurance "I am very pleased to come across you. You want an assurance from me that I will not forget the Indians. Well, I assure you, I shall not and cannot forget the Indians. I shall ever remember them and make it a point to tell my father how immensely gratified I have been with the magnificent reception your people have given me. It shall also be my pleasant duty to tell my father that you are in need of wider sympathy. I carry with me very happy impressions about India." Sentiments, doubtless worthy of a Sovereign to be, Sovereign of the British Dominions over the Seas, Sovereign of the British Commonwealth of Nations. Gentlemen, that is the picture of Mati Lal, a picture of patriotism, loyalty, devotion and sincerity.

These are qualities which Golap Lal inherited from his great brothers whose achievements in the

region of the maintenance of the inviolability of the Indian States, may well serve to stand out as an epoch in our history. Their undaunted exposure of the Bhopal tangle saved a great Moslem State destined, as we realise it now, to play a great part in the future dispensation of India. Their fearless disclosure of the Kashmir imbroglio to which Golap Lal contributed a substantial share, drew down bureaucratic wrath upon them, but the disclosure which staggered humanity, and perhaps the Viceroy more than humanity, is the contribution jointly of Sisir Kumar, Mati Lal and Golap Lal to the national cause and to the cause of the Princes of India.

The Patriotic Patrika.

Gentlemen, the manner in which under the sagacious guidance of Golap Lal, a legacy of Sisir Kumar and Mutty Lal to the people of Bengal contributed to serve the country, cannot but call forth our sincere gratitude. He was a legacy of Sisir Kumar and Mati Lal to the people of Bengal. As editor of the far-seeing Amrita Bazar Patrika he did not get up monster meetings, nor did he rend the skies by speeches, but his heart, like the hearts of his greater brothers who preceded him, bled at the sorrows and miseries of the poor, half-starved, sometimes unfed mass of the people of his country. He was not afraid, frail in body and rickety in physique though he was, he was not afraid to enter into fire and water and succour the distressed. Tales of oppression or of repression in any quarter made him restless. He never failed to enter a fearless protest whenever and wherever he thought the Government went wrong, or found to

be doing an act of injustice. Misconduct on the part of anybody never escaped his lynx eyes. He was ever ready to advocate the interests of his educated countrymen in a manner at once vigorous, weighty and self-respecting. He never hesitated to denounce any policy which made or tended to make a distinction between the white and the black. He cared not for the praise of others. His patriotism was unselfish. Under him the Patrika remained the best loved, but perhaps the most misunderstood, paper in the country. But that has been the misfortune of every unselfish institution in history, in all ages and in all climes. He seldom stirred out of his modest home, yet the Patrika office has always been a reservoir of important informations which come crowding in by means of letters and telegrams from all parts of the country from those who knew the man best fitted to do justice to them.

A Staunch Hindu.

Golap Lal was a staunch Hindu and as such he was a bulwark of Hinduism against the onslaughts of go-ahead reformers and ambitious revolutionaries. But he was never unmindful of or impervious to the necessity of judicious reforms, and the certainty of it under the forceful influence of modern civilization.

“A time like this demands,
Great hearts, strong minds,
True faith, and willing hands ;
Men whom the best of office cannot kill,
Men whom the spoils of office cannot buy :
Men who possess opinions and a will :
Men who have honour, men who will not lie.”

And it is quite in the fitness of things that we should meet here in this Institute to express our sincere grief over the loss of our Founder President. In your name and on your behalf, I offer my heartfelt condolence to his two sons and the Ghose family some of whom, particularly my young friend Babu Tushar Kanti Ghose are before the public eye. I have no doubt, they will maintain the high traditions which the generation which has just passed away created for itself and maintained unsullied through good and evil report.

**Landholder's Conference at the Durbhanga House on encroachment on the Permanent Settlement,
December, 27, 1932.**

In seconding this resolution which has been so ably moved by my friend the Maharaja of Mymensingh I would request the representatives of the community assembled in this conference to consider the serious situation with which the entire landed interest is confronted to-day. The age-old and age-honoured rights and privileges enjoyed by our community are gradually vanishing away. And if we do not awaken ourselves to the gravity of the situation we shall before long reduce ourselves to the position of mere rent gatherers, with all the risks that such a position entails without its corresponding advantages.

Apathy of the Government.

It is a matter of deep regret that, although the community have consistently supported the Government, the latter have been apathetic to our interests, and in fact have not paid enough consideration to the maintenance of our rights and privileges when they undertook to enact and amend from time to time, various tenancy laws purporting to tax agricultural income and impose cesses of various descriptions, the latest being the proposed Education Cess. And now comes from high quarters the recommendation to deprive us of the special representation which we have hitherto enjoyed for nearly a quarter of a century now.

The Magna Charta of the Landlords.

The Permanent Settlement is the Magna Charta of the landholding community, and any infringement of any of its terms will mean simply a breach of faith on the part of the authority. It is a matter of serious concern that infringements of the same have been consistent and systematic.

Gentlemen, the times are out of joint, and forces of reaction and disintegration have entered the body politic of our society. It will be sheer folly on our part not to take note of the changes that we find around us,—changes in the social sphere, in the political field, and in the region of economics. We have got to adjust ourselves to varying circumstances, and map out a programme of work for our own welfare and in our own interest. If we want to preserve our entity as a whole, it is high time that we should rise to a man against all encroachments or against any attempts in that direction.

With these few words I would commend this resolution for your acceptance.

9th Resolution.

This Conference disapproves of and views with great alarm certain decisions of the Courts in India and England bearing upon the land laws of Bengal and of the permanently settled areas, no less than certain observations presumed to be by way of dictum, made in the Report of the Indian Statutory Commission presided over by Sir John Simon, calculated to

adversely affect the landholders of Bengal, and legislations already on the Statute Book and other ill-advised measures in contemplation having a tendency to prejudice the interests of the zemindars by circumventing the provisions of the most solemn document of land tenure in India, namely, the Permanent Settlement, and in view of the fact that these may create a want of confidence more serious than can be imagined, not to talk of unrest in the minds of landholders as a body in India at a moment when she is passing through a critical period in her history; this Conference respectfully but strongly advises the Government to take immediate steps to disabuse the landholders of India as a class that the Government proposes to countenance no encroachment upon the rights and privileges of those whose services have often been recognised and, appreciated by eminent British administrators as those of the "pillars of the State", and to acknowledge and declare in a suitable and unmistakeable manner the inviolability of these rights and privileges, and particularly the indefeasible and irrevocable character of the Permanent Settlement which carries with it its own significance and solemnity raising it to the dignity of a treaty, rendering any violation of or

deviation from it by either party to the contract without the consent of the other a breach of great consequence.

Proposed by the Maharaja of Mymensing.

Seconded by Mr. Profulla Nath Tagore.

**Presidential Address at the Annual General Meeting of the
British Indian Association held
on Friday, the 31st of March, 1933.**

GENTLEMEN,

For years past you have been accustomed to an address from your outgoing President briefly reviewing the activities of the Association and the events in the country during the year. In pursuance of that convention I take the liberty of inflicting upon you my ideas of certain topics of the day which may or may not interest you but, I cannot address you without expressing on your behalf our deep sense of sorrow at the demise during the year we are closing of one of our valued members, Raja Gopendra Krishna Deb Bahadur, a scion of a very noble and ancient family under whose auspices the British Indian Association was originally started, and who helped it to grow to adolescence acquiring that position, weight and influence in the country, which have been rightly recognised as those of the pioneer political institution in India. The Sovabazar family has given this Association more than one President to guide us in our activities. It is identified with us. On the other hand, we rejoice greatly at the signal honours which have been conferred by the Government upon the Hon'ble the Maharajadhiraja Bahadur of Durbhanga, of K.C.I.E., upon our esteemed friend the Hon'ble Sir Provash Chunder Mitter who has been made a K.C.S.I. and upon Khan Bahadur K. G. M.

Faroqui who has been made a Nawab. All of them have richly deserved the honours bestowed upon them, and our heartfelt desire is that these members of the Association may live long to enjoy their honours and earn higher recognition of their services to the country.

Gratitude to Sir John Anderson.

Gentlemen, I cannot close the year of the British Indian Association without expressing on your behalf our deep gratitude to the Government of His Excellency Sir John Anderson, which has been instrumental in saving a number of estates which otherwise would have disappeared, and among them many old and eminent houses of Bengal, under stress of economic depression. Some of these houses are those to whose credit may be attributed much of the noble work for which Bengal Zemindars are noted, no matter what our latter-day detractors may say. The Government of Bengal has been prompt in their decision on which the Revenue Department lost no time to take action, to rescue those who have, during a century and a half, kept the treasury replenished with unfailing and scrupulous regularity. The concession that the Government has made for the realisation of cesses from your brother zemindars in some places deserves our highest appreciation. Gentlemen, you will permit me to express on your behalf our gratitude to the Government of our province for the great concessions it has made in our difficulty the end of which is not within sight yet. It may put us to the necessity of expecting the Government to extend the period of assistance to us.

The Poona Pact.

I cannot pass on to the very important topics of the Poona Pact and the representation of the landlords without making a brief reference to the hopeless economic depression through which we, in fact the whole country, are now passing. It is a depression for which nobody can imaginably be held responsible; not the Zemindars and certainly not the tenants, nor the Government. It is due to causes over which none of us had any control, but we, the landlords of Bengal, feel the pinch of it such as nobody else does. It makes us fail to fulfil our commitments, supreme commitments to the State. They are commitments into which our ancestors or predecessors in title entered, for the mutual benefit of the State and people of the country, with the landholding community as the advance guard to watch over their interests. And gentlemen, I am proud to say that they have played their part nobly and manfully. That undoubtedly is the verdict of history and, rest assured, history does not lie. We are hard hit because our friends, our tenants, are cruelly hit; yet there are but few rent suits, a circumstance which is evidenced by the fact that revenues derived from court fees have gone down considerably, and work in the courts has diminished, rendering it necessary for the Government to retrench their staff of judicial officers all over the province. That is not all, for it is a matter of common knowledge now, and one which is clearly appreciated as stated in the Government Resolution on the revenue administration of the province, that the happiest relationship exists between ourselves and our tenants. We have been

lenient in our demands, we have been judicious in our realisations, in the hope that our tenants will be considerate in fulfilling their commitments to the best of their ability. Sympathy can only be met by a feeling of reciprocity, and if our sympathy has gone out to them in their present economic difficulties, I have no doubt that we in return have got their hearts with us. Personally, I would request you gentlemen, to go further to cement the happy relationship that exists, and to find out the means by which we may be mutually helpful, by which they may realise that they have no better friends than their landlords, and we may realise that we have no higher trust to discharge than to seek their well-being and to help them in their uplift.

Prejudicial effect of the Poona Pact.

So far as the Hindus of Bengal are concerned the Poona Pact is the burning question of the day. It was accomplished behind our back and almost without notice to us. I say almost, for to be sure, some sort of a notice was sent to a townsman of ours as a gentleman believed to be representing the Hindu community of the Province. For reasons best known to himself, he never took the trouble of informing the general public, or those who actually represented Hindu opinion in Bengal, that such a notice had been received, but chose to send one whose opinions and interests could not have been concealed from or unknown to him. Gentlemen, we did not know anything of this invitation until long after the entire proceeding was over. That unfortunately is the way in which our

national interests are watched and promoted now-a-days in certain quarters. Those who assume the role of leadership must never forget that their duty is not discharged when they have consulted their individual or party interests only. The higher duty is to consult those whose interests are proposed to be sacrificed, to let them have their say in the matter. The negotiation was carried on and the matter arranged in altogether an unclean manner, and on your behalf I have no hesitation in condemning and repudiating it. We can never accept that pact, and we shall never do so unless we make up our minds to commit *harikiri*. In pursuance of that determination of ours, not very long ago a gathering of representative Hindus under the leadership of my friend, Sir Bepin Behari Ghose, who has our hearty congratulation upon his elevation to the Viceroy's Executive Council, was held to express our deep dissatisfaction with the pact which purports to sacrifice the caste Hindus of Bengal such as nothing else can. The pact purports to drive a poisoned wedge into the body politic of the Hindus where none such had hitherto existed. We have laid our protest before the Prime Minister of England, as well as before Mahatma Gandhi, and those, who, being parties to the Conference took it upon themselves to decide and seal the political future of Bengal, hitherto the most advanced of provinces in culture, thought and political consciousness. Gentlemen, we do not mean to rest content there, but shall proceed as we are advised. It is a difficult operation, and now an uphill work, in which I call upon everyone of my brothers in this Association and outside it to bear his share of the

arduous task of obtaining an annulment of the pact. We are not unmindful of the claims of the classes in whose interest the pact was arranged, but we will never tolerate a division in our own house, however big the political spoil may be.

The Prime minister's Award.

Against the Prime Minister's Award we have entered our emphatic protest, particularly against that part of it which relates to the representation of the landlords in the Legislative Council under the new Constitution, an outline of which has been given you in the White Paper which is just published. Gentlemen, in a house of 140, we have five seats allotted to us. In a house of 250 also we shall have five seats allotted to us. That is the Prime Minister's Award. You cannot call this political justice done by the first and foremost statesman in England to those who have never flinched from the straight and even path of loyalty, and to whose public spirit, wealth and culture must be attributed a very large portion of the progress of the country. In denial of our rights to have a proportionately larger share of representation in an enlarged house it has often been argued that because other constituencies are open to us, and because advantage has been taken by some of us of them, we, as a class, do not deserve more. In all seriousness gentlemen, I ask the question, is it after all the settled policy of the constitution-makers to deny a class, an important class of His Majesty's subjects, who have been the bulwark of British rule from its very foundation in India, their legitimate rights while rewarding

those to whose credit neither culture nor public service may be attributed in the same degree. If some of our class have found more suitable constituencies elsewhere it is because by their culture, public spirit and activities, not as Zemindars, but as members of the body politic, they have gained and deserved the trust and confidence of the people whom they were privileged to represent in the Councils. They themselves have never claimed to be representatives of the landlords any more than they have ever been claimed by the landlords as their representatives. As persons representing their constituencies they are bound in conscience to follow the mandate of their electors whose interests may conflict with those of the landlords of which community they may be members only by accident. In these circumstances, I fail to see how justice can be denied to us, and if it is denied as it has been hitherto, it will be tantamount to political injustice. Gentlemen, our demand is not disproportionate to our services to the State. We ask for a recognition commensurate with our position in society and in the country, and we mean to fight for it till we get it.

Second Chamber in Bengal.

The British Indian Association, however, may rightly congratulate itself upon the decision of the British Cabinet, as appears from the White Paper, that Bengal should have a Second Chamber. This is a matter for which we made the most strenuous effort, beginning with the deputation which the All India Landholders led by the British Indian Association

waited upon Lord Irwin at Simla in July, 1929. It is gratifying to note, that His Majesty's Government have seen the wisdom of a Second Chamber in Bengal to be composed of men of high property qualifications and other services qualifications. It will be composed of men whose sober judgment and stake in the country can only help to make for better legislation in the Province, and therefore for far-reaching administrative reforms and improvements in the relationship of one class of people and another. But I have two suggestions to make and to impress them upon His Majesty's Government. One is that to the qualifications set out in the White Paper of membership for the Second Chamber in Bengal may be added the very cogent qualification of holding honours conferred by the Government, and the other is that membership of the Second Chamber should be by direct election, and not be made dependant upon an indirect choice, the futility of which stands exposed beyond any support. When I say this I have in mind the very invidious distinction that is made in the White Paper between the composition of the Upper Chamber in the U. P. and Bengal. In that province it is based upon direct election, while in Bengal a small modicum of twelve members in a house of sixty-five will be privileged to directly represent the general constituencies. The rest of the representation is either indirect, or communal. We condemn both and insist that Bengal should be placed on a par with the U. P. in the matter of election to the Upper Chamber, namely the entire chamber should be founded upon the method of direct election unless replaced by a better and more sensible mode of indirect

election than is laid down in the White Paper. We recognise also that the life of the Upper Chamber with an added benefit of partial renewal is to be longer than the life of the primary representative chamber, if only to withstand the transient gust of a popular passion or sentiment.

Larger Representation.

Gentlemen, this is not all. I cannot ask you to endorse the view of the White Paper that the Upper Chamber in Bengal where the Lower Chamber is 250 strong, should be no larger than a house of 65 only. I have no hesitation in suggesting that an Upper House in our province smaller in size than two-thirds of our lower chamber shall never satisfy the landlords of Bengal. And if you look at the problem from the point of view of the services rendered by the landlords in the permanently settled area to the Government, you will agree with me that our larger representation in the lower, and an adequate size of the Upper Chamber are our due meed. Governments of provinces where the ryotwari system prevails have to spend nearly 40 per cent. of the aggregate revenues they collect by way of collection charges only. All that is borne by the landlords in Bengal. In Madras they spend 2 crores, while in Bengal the Government incurs a small expenditure of not far beyond 20 lakhs for similar purpose, namely, for purpose of collection of revenue.

The Permanent Settlement.

Gentlemen, I cannot leave the White Paper without drawing your attention to the fact that it contains

no reference whatsoever to the inviolability of the Permanent Settlement as one of the Fundamental Rights proposed to be included in the new constitution. This is a matter which we have often urged upon the authorities, Provincial and Imperial. The justice of our demand has never been questioned. Yet a matter so serious and so sacred and so vital to the interests of both the landlord and the tenant has been given the go-by by His Majesty's Government in their consideration of what Fundamental Rights India is to have under the new constitution. Gentlemen, I ask you to collect your forces, to make up your mind and go before the country, here and in England, to urge your case if you do not want to perish as a class in the near future. In the meantime every effort should be made to have the inviolability of the Permanent Settlement included among the Fundamental Rights in the constitution.

Misrepresentation of Landlords.

Gentlemen, you, need not be reminded of the sinister attacks that are made on us from time to time from irresponsible quarters. These must be repudiated and countered. Some of them are based on false data and others on malice. To look into these motives more closely it is necessary that we should organise all our resources and forces. I therefore call upon you to organise yourselves better while it is yet time, and place your case fairly and squarely before the country through an organ of your own. The need for such an organ has long been felt, and without it your case at every point appears to be going by default. Here it is

necessary for me to point out that a diligent propaganda in our own interest should be organised. All other communities, adversely disposed towards us, are sedulously carrying on theirs with what effect cannot be unknown to you. Our propaganda should be carried on better, here and in England, until at any rate the Constitution Act is passed. To that end I myself have made certain enquiries with the result that, I feel that it could be carried on at almost minimum cost, if all of us should make up our minds to combine for the purpose. Take note gentlemen, that unless you look out and equip yourselves for the fray in front of you, you shall stand condemned before God and man. You shall stand responsible before posterity who have a right to expect you to have played your part unflinchingly and honourably. What is needed on your behalf is propaganda, always a mighty weapon in all political warfare. I do not suggest for one moment that your propaganda should in any sense be unscrupulous, such as the propaganda against you has hitherto been, but that your propaganda should be based strictly upon truth and justice to which you are entitled.

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Encroachment on Landlord's rights.

Gentlemen, it is extremely unfortunate that these periodic attempts of onslaught on the landlords and their rights should be made by persons who have no right to do so. You are aware of the proposals made from time to time to amend the Bengal Tenancy Act. They are to deprive the landlord of his right of pre-emption in the event of a change of hands of the tenure,

of his right to a fee by way of *Salami* for recognition of transfer, and of his right to enhance rents in certain events. Of the first, or the second, I need not say much beyond drawing your attention to the very able speeches made in the Council by our friends, and particularly by the Raja Bahadur of Nashipur, who are of you in this Association, exposing the hollowness of the argument advanced *ad nauseam*, that the tenant would be better off without either or both. Without the first he falls into the hands of the money-lender who conducts his business on the principle of the maximum of profit on minimum of investment, and without the second the landlord is condemned to a state of helplessness from which every free man, every subject of the Crown is free,—namely, freedom of contract. To the benefits of contractual rights every subject, no matter what his station in life, is entitled. If every subject of His Majesty is free to choose the party with whom to enter into a contract whether of tenancy, or of sale, or of service, I cannot realise by what process of reasoning or logic, the immoral principle of forcible or compulsory submission to an arrangement to which the landlord is not a party, and which is entered into without notice to him, and in fact behind his back, can be foisted upon him, with any show of decency. With regard to the last item I will say only this, that it should not be forgotten that the occupancy tenant who in every case pays a very moderate rent is almost immune against enhancement of rent. He is as secure as security itself. The entire tenancy laws are in his favour. And the rules of enhancement are always subject to rigorous and stringent conditions, the *onus*

of the fulfilment of which to the satisfaction of the Courts who are always jealous of any invasion on the rights and privileges of the ryots, lies upon the landlord. Can any arrangement more satisfactory be imagined? If you believe in your Courts, if you have faith in your Courts you will agree with me that the proposal is not only unreasonable, but perhaps is not free from malice. If I may be permitted to venture a speculation I would submit that it is a movement carried on at the instance, and perhaps in the interest of the money-lender for reasons I have just explained.

The White Paper.

Gentlemen, the White Paper is now before us. You will not expect me to give any detailed and definite opinion about its provisions. It is too early yet. It sets out the frame of the constitution to be. It is liable yet to be modified or liberalised by the Joint Parliamentary Committee. After that it is again liable to be modified or enlarged by Parliament so that, before it finds a place upon the Statute Book every letter of it will be thoroughly scrutinised, and if the diehards in India and in England do not succeed in materially altering the features of it, it will be expected to present India with a constitution, the nature of which is patent on the face of it. On the successful working of it will depend our future advancement in constitutional government and for such successful working, as I conceive, the best energies of the best men in the country will have to be put forth. I am confident gentlemen, that your community will not lag behind though, going through the document one stands amazed at the feeling

of distrust by which responsible Statesmen even in England are actuated when dealing with India. The brakes, euphemistically called "safeguards" set up on every wheel of the locomotive of the Indian constitution are calculated to render it hopelessly nugatory, unless you have at the head of affairs an extremely wise, liberal-minded and prudent Governor at whose disposal must be placed the services of equally wise, capable and resourceful Ministers. These men, gentlemen, do not grow like blackberries. Under the cloak of self-government and of autonomy, undefined and undefinable responsibilities have been created or provided for, and complications created and provided for, which a prudent man would blush to designate as constitutional. Less of brakes and more of sympathy and trust might have smoothed the situation. That is how I read the White Paper. I should advise you gentlemen, to struggle for full Provincial Autonomy, leave aside the Federation which is not likely to materialise in our generation, so long as diehards in England and India are what they are, and the conditions precedent to the establishment of it remain impossible of fulfilment.

Bengal unfairly treated in White Paper.

But gentlemen, there is one feature of the White Paper which I would commend to your notice. It is the admission of Bengal having been treated with scant consideration in the financial adjustment of the Empire. To remedy what was a palpable injustice done to Bengal under the Meston Award, a portion of the Jute duty is proposed under the new constitution to be transferred to the province where jute is grown.

Gentlemen, look at it from any viewpoint you like, equitable, moral or legal, the whole of this duty belongs to us to the exclusion of the Central Government who have no manner of claim upon it or any portion of it. Our whole-hearted support is at the disposal of our Government in their endeavour to get the entirety of it allocated to them. As it stands however, it is meagre justice, but it helps us to tide over our difficulties. We hope, and we demand that the nation-building objects shall now receive the full attention of the authorities. Paucity of funds shall no longer be pleaded against them. Let us not anticipate that much of it will be swallowed up by the services, the regulation of pay, pension and privileges of which are reserved as heretofore in the hands of the Secretary of State for India, leaving little, if at all, to be utilised for nation-building purposes.

Our Ministers.

Gentlemen, on your behalf I should like to express my appreciation of the signal services that are being rendered by the Ministers of our Government, two of whom are honoured members of your Association. The Industries in Bengal are in a fair way towards development, and from what I know of the activities of the Department I have reason to believe that immense efforts are being made to revive dead industries with modern implements and on modern principles, and to encourage the starting of new ones. To the credit of the Revenue Member, who is also one of you, must be attributed the leniency with which the Government has treated us in our difficulty. I have no doubt that

I voice your unanimous opinion when I appeal to His Excellency the Governor of Bengal, to be pleased to take steps to extend his tenure of office beyond the statutory period. To this must be added the plan of the Joint Electorate brought about by the Ministerial side of the Government. This is a problem which ought to have been solved long ago, but better late than never. The solution of this difficult problem shall always redound to the credit of one who is one of you.

Agricultural Indebtedness.

There is one more topic to which I shall briefly refer. It is the question of agricultural indebtedness. It is an undoubted fact that the agriculturists in this country are heavily indebted, and that the loans that they incur carry with them heavy rates of interest. The question is often asked, how must the situation be met? To me there appear to be two methods to solve the problem. One is the organisation of rural credit, *i.e.*, by giving loans to the agriculturist at a fair and reasonable rate of interest, and the second is to procure for the agriculturist economic price for his produce. It is the brushing aside of the middlemen system. Cannot a system of marketing be introduced, organised and maintained for the benefit of the agriculturist,—to enable him to obtain economic price for his produce? To me it is clear that these problems may be solved by land mortgage banks founded on commercial basis and run on co-operative principles, the establishment of which for the relief both of the peasant and the Zemindar desirous of improving his property, has been recommended by the Indian Banking Enquiry

Committee. It is to be regretted that the Government has hitherto done nothing to give effect to the recommendation so fruitful of beneficial results to the people of the entire province. I ask you to seriously consider these problems as your own for, after all, upon the prosperity of the tiller of the soil depends your prosperity and more than that, the prosperity of your country.

Activities of the Association.

Gentlemen, one of the best means of strengthening our hands seems to be an accretion to our membership. I am afraid we are not sufficiently alive to the importance of that fact. A body enlarged and united is a body invincible. To realise this principle it will be necessary for us to enlarge our membership and to create a study circle within it. If each one of our existing members should make it a point to bring in the course of the year one new member we shall have a number whose voice and weight shall not go unheeded in the country. Let us therefore resolve, that in the year in front of us each one of us shall bring in at least one new member, that each one of us shall help in the formation of a study circle to deal with subjects having reference to Bengal and specially to the landlords of the province, and that each one of us shall help in procuring the affiliation of other institutions with objects similar to those of the British Indian Association. Affiliation undoubtedly would facilitate solid harmonious work, but whether affiliated or not we, the landholding community, should lose no time to unite as a team and put up our combined efforts to better

the condition of our tenantry, and along with them of ourselves as that of one man. The mentality which is responsible for the spirit, that if a thing has to be done, it must be done through me and through none else, is not the spirit which prevails among us. We refuse to give such a spirit any quarters. Ours must be joint work, the credit or discredit for which should belong to each one of us.

Gentlemen, the repeated outrages upon the lives of valuable servants of the Government perpetrated in the name of, I do not know what, call for universal condemnation. We have condemned it before, and in your name and on your behalf, I condemn it again. These atrocious methods will carry us no nearer our goal. We believe in constitutional efforts based on undeviating loyalty to our King and our Country.

Before I close gentlemen, I should like to say a word or two in appreciation of the cordial co-operation I have received from your Committee and your Secretaries. They have never spared any pains to further the cause of the Association, and to them the zealous co-operation of the staff of your Association has been invaluable.

**Address as Chairman of the Reception Committee of the
All-Bengal Landholders' Conference.**

August 13, 1933.

MAHARAJADHIRAJ BAHADUR, MAHARAJAS, RAJAS AND
BROTHER ZEMINDARS,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you here this afternoon, and it is a most gratifying thought, that so many of you, representatives of distinguished houses in the province of Bengal, should have had the goodness to respond to our invitation requesting you to meet in Conference, to discuss important questions which are agitating the whole country, and questions vitally affecting the interests and well-being of the community to which we belong. When I say this, I must not be understood to mean that we, Zemindars are a body apart from the people of the country. We are of them, no less than they are of us, for, in the economy of things, in this and in the sister province of Behar at any rate, there are but few people who have no landed interest as such, the interest which we, in this Association in common with other Landholders' Associations in Bengal and Behar, represent. The British Indian Association composed of Bengal and Behar landlords, claims to be the parent of them all, with a tradition behind it, founded and created by those of your ancestors who have left an undying name in the fiscal and political history of Bengal. To their memory, gentlemen, we pay our respectful homage and tribute.

All-Bengal Landholder's Conference.

Gentlemen, here in this hall you have met from time to time in Conference, to consider problems of political importance to the country, and economic and legislative importance to the landed interest. There is no doubt, that some of them have been of high significance, but I am led to believe that, there never has been a Conference of the landed gentry of Bengal which had been faced with problems so difficult of solution, and which required such wise and gentle handling and statesmanlike outlook to deal with, as those with which we, at the present moment, are confronted. By your sufferance, gentlemen, the British Indian Association has been bold enough to take it upon itself to invite you to this Conference, and it seems to me when I look around me, that it has been more than justified to seek your confidence. Gentlemen, I thank you on behalf of the Association for the response you have made to its invitation, which I need hardly tell you, greatly enhances the pleasure I have in welcoming you. It is a pleasure to which I cannot, I confess, give adequate expression. But I repeat again, that on behalf of the British Indian Association I accord you our heartiest welcome this evening.

Joint Select Committee.

Gentlemen, the problem which throws every other question affecting the country, more especially the provinces of Bengal and Behar, in the shade, is the question of the White Paper which is being scrutinised by the Joint Select Committee, before whom as you

know, the Maharajadhiraj Bahadur of Burdwan, the premier landlord of Bengal, appeared to lead evidence in our interest. A worthy ex-President of ours, the forceful and convincing evidence which he offered must be well-known to you all. I will not, therefore, endeavour to repeat it here, but if you will hold your patience for a little while, I have no doubt that our friend will take you into his confidence, and give you a description of it, and tell you his own impression of what the effect of it has been, or may have been. Gentlemen, in this connection I need only remind you that our gratitude to the Maharajadhiraj Bahadur is immense in that, we had the proud privilege of being represented by the foremost man amongst ourselves, one whose knowledge of the difficulties, present and future, of affairs Zamindaree, is, if you will permit me to put it in my own unvarnished way, unrivalled.

Legitimate fears.

But gentlemen, from all the reports at our disposal, reports from those who have the ear of the country, because they are level-headed, is that even the White Paper which in itself does not presage a distinct advance in the governmental system of the country, has been, and is being whittled down. You will agree with me when I suggest that, that is a disappointing outlook for which the country is not prepared, and which the country will not be in a mood very cheerfully to accept. The country will never lose sight of the pledges given by the Prime Minister "on behalf of His Majesty's Government" and "with the authority of his colleagues" that (1) "the view of His

Majesty's Government is that the responsibility for the government of India should be placed upon legislatures, central and provincial, with such provisions as may be necessary for a period of transition'' and again (2) ''that the Governors' provinces will be constituted on the basis of full responsibility,'' no matter what futile attempts should be made in responsible quarters where honour, fairness and integrity ought to prevail, to explain them away, and even to give them the go by under pretence at once specious and perverse. I say, therefore, with the Maharajadhiraj Bahadur of Burdwan, who, on more than one occasion in England, voiced our opinion, and also the opinion of the country, that if His Majesty's Government allows itself to be guided, dismayed or overawed by a number of political agitators and other administrative failures, all of whom have displayed the rare genius of making a mess in whatever position of authority, requiring tact and judgment, they have ever been placed in. I will not go more into the details of their career but I will remind them and you, that there is not an Englishman who, in his calmer moments, has not regretted the deeds or misdeeds of these estimable gentlemen in office.

The work before us.

Be that as it may, gentlemen, we of this Conference are determined to carry on our propaganda for the threefold formulæ of the inviolability of the Permanent Settlement in Bengal and Behar, the establishment of a Second Chamber, and a more adequate representation of the landed interest in the

different legislatures, provincial and central, in addition to the programme upon which the sober and loyal section of the country as a whole has set its heart. Gentlemen, the permanence of the Permanent Settlement is a problem upon which all responsible opinion, whether fiscal or political, is in agreement, and we in this Association have carried on a vigorous and systematic agitation to educate public opinion, both in India and in England, on the political expediency, equity and justice of re-establishing the Permanent Settlement upon a permanent, perpetual and unalterable basis. Nor have we been less insistent upon our demand for a Second Chamber in our province, and the sister formula of a larger representation of the landed interest in all the legislatures under any future constitution.

Activities of the British Indian Association.

In this connection I may be permitted to report to you that through the efforts of the British Indian Association on your behalf, ever since the memorable deputation of the All-India Landholders upon Lord Irwin, which by the way, this Association was privileged to organise, we have been able to carry on an intensive propaganda for the official recognition of the three formulæ to which I have drawn your attention, and to which I want you to adhere till our demands are fulfilled. I am happy to say, and I have no doubt that my friend the Maharajadhiraj Bahadur will bear me out that, the justice and equity of our demands has made a great impression upon responsible English opinion and public

men of the day, but whether we shall eventually be enabled to obtain them all, will largely depend upon the strength of the joint and united efforts we can put forth and sustain. We must all put our shoulders to the wheel,—each according to his might, and rest assured your efforts will be crowned with success. The principle of each one of our demands has been unofficially recognised. We must exert ourselves to secure their official, I mean their constitutional recognition. To that end the services of the British Indian Association are at your disposal. You have only to command them and, in doing so, come forward to strengthen our hands with your assistance and collaboration, moral support, of course, and every other support within your power.

Sir N. N. Sircar.

Gentlemen, while we are contemplating at this end the progress of the deliberations of the Joint Committee, our thoughts of gratitude go out to our worthy countryman, I mean Sir Nripendra Nath Sircar, who has been fighting the battle of his motherland in a far off region, in an unfriendly atmosphere, and against heavy odds, the principal of which are the determined attitude of some provincial leaders to let down our province financially and politically to benefit theirs, by placing every obstacle in the way of legitimate Bengal revenues being allotted to her, and by their officious and obtrusive support of the so-called Poona Pact, which on the face of it, and from all materials at our disposal, was arrived at behind the back of our ill-fated province. From materials at my disposal I am convinced that a game of hide and seek has systematically been played

in the negotiations preliminary to what is now known as the Poona Pact in respect of Bengal, in every quarter, including the Yervada Jail. Mahatma Gandhi says, I am quoting, gentlemen, his language, "My own position is quite clear. I was wholly uninterested in the number of seats reserved for untouchables or depressed classes." This observation inevitably gives rise to the question, "Where then was the necessity for a pact, if it was not for reservation of seats and cutting the Hindu community of Bengal into two halves?" Was it by the way that the reservation came about?

Poona Pact.

You will, have noticed in this connection that advantage has recently been sought to be taken before the Joint Committee by no less a person than the Secretary of State for India himself, and other provincial leaders whose step-motherly interest for Bengal is well-known, of the blessing which our great countryman, Dr. Rabindra Nath Tagore, is alleged to have accorded to that pact. You have also seen in the press Dr. Tagore's explanation of the circumstances under which he felt impelled to send a wire, the far-reaching and deadly effect of which, no man with any respect, admiration and love for Gandhiji could or would anticipate. To all that however, my answer is that these amiable gentlemen are commendably ready, keen and eager to take their shelter behind a stray message communicated under stress of painful circumstances, of one distinguished Bengalee, to the exclusion of all that he has hitherto, extending over a period of 50

years, said and suggested for the better government of our body politic. To them my advice is that if you take the lean you must take the fat also. But, gentlemen, the history of the Poona Pact is a discreditable story when examined either from the point of view of a political arrangement or a social adjustment. Those who took part in it, under threat of "fast unto death", conspired to sacrifice the political interests of the party, none of whose accredited agents and leaders were even asked to be present, or take part in the now famous *pour parlour* at Poona, in September, in the year of grace 1932 (nineteen hundred and thirty-two). Gentlemen, it is an admitted fact that among the numerous signatories to the so-called Pact, there was no Bengali Hindu, and yet our friends in the Joint Select Committee would unblushingly insist upon calling it an "agreed formula". Gentlemen, I confess that my knowledge of English is not as wide as theirs, but it is certainly not as slippery and evasive as theirs either. I have yet to know that an arrangement arrived at by un-interested but not disinterested parties can be set as an "agreed formula" against one who had nothing to do or had not been given the opportunity to, have anything to do with the deliberations or the negotiations of an unholy pact which is fraught with dire and dangerous consequences for the future well-being of our province. It is inconceivable that these worthy friends of ours brought a fair, unprejudiced and unbiassed mind to bear upon the consideration of a problem, the solution of which can be arrived at only by ourselves as a domestic question, without the intervention of a third party, however high his position may be. These

friends have approached the question in a jesting spirit, leaving us to feel the wound. I repeat again, gentlemen, that it is a discreditable story and the less our worthy friends talk about the Poona Pact the better. But the fact remains that Bengal must stand on her own legs and square up her own accounts.

Income tax and Jute Export Duty.

Gentlemen, to Sir John Anderson our debt of gratitude is twofold. He it is, who has been instrumental in maintaining a level-headed administration in the province in times of turmoils and difficulties. He it is, to whom as to my valiant friend, Sir Nripendra Nath Sircar, we shall owe the success, if success be our meed and in store for us, of our crusade against the total misappropriation of the Jute Export duty by those who do not contribute a farthing towards the prosperity of the cultivation of that valuable commodity, for the benefit of those who without the resourceful and expanding finances of the sister Presidencies of Bengal and Bombay, would perhaps be left in a state of administrative *rigor-mortis*. It will be recalled, how at the Second Round Table Conference our esteemed friend, Sir Provas Chander Mitter, exposed the injustice of fastening this heavy burden on Bengal. Gentlemen, it is the bounden duty of us all, the people of this province, to do all we can to strengthen the hands of our Governor and Sir Nripendra Nath Sircar, in their gallant endeavour to recover the entire Jute Export Duty for the benefit of the province where it is grown, by the sweat of the brow of its people, where it is manufactured, and from where it is exported.

Gentlemen, economically we are hit, the severity of which may not be within the experience and memory of the living man among us. We are hit, because our tenantry are also hit. But the low credit of both has not created an intolerable situation in spite of the mischievous propaganda that is being carried on by self-seeking agitators against us,—to create a breach between ourselves and our tenantry in some quarters. Here, of course, we must admit, that we are at fault more than that they are in the right. We have no organisation, we make no effort to combat the misrepresentations that are daily circulated against us. If therefore, you desire the old happy relationship to be restored between the landlords and tenants, I appeal to you, to seriously consider the steps you can take to mend the situation. Active propaganda on our part appears to be one effective means of combating such misrepresentations against us. But it is for you to consider the ways and means.

One word more, gentlemen, and I leave you free to devote yourselves to the consideration of problems for which you have met here. It is the desirability of joint and co-ordinate action by the various landholders' associations in the province, in all matters affecting our interest as a whole. We have recently been doing it and it is a pleasing feature of our activities. You will be gratified to know that we, of the British Indian Association, and that distinguished body of landlords, the Bengal Landholders' Association, have, for the past years, in almost every important matter affecting landlords, acted conjointly as one body without merging the individuality of one into the other. And, for

this singular achievement the best thanks of us all are due to the Maharajadhiraj Bahadur of Durbhanga and Maharaja Bahadur Sasi Kanta Acharyya Choudhury of Mymensingh, the President and Secretary respectively of the Bengal Landholders' Association. The ardent spirit of co-operation and even of collaboration evinced by them and other sister district associations, has achieved results which will convince you that the landlords may yet play a considerable part in the future history of the country. What I mean to suggest therefore, is the establishment or recognition of a central body in federal relationship with the different units. We are living in days when federalism is the common talk, when we think, and breathe, and perhaps dream in terms of federalism. We are determined to maintain the individual and independent jurisdiction and sphere of work of each one of our organisations, but desire to attain the solid unity of the landed interest all over the permanently settled areas. I therefore, venture to put forward before you the federal idea in respect of our own organisation, in full hope that, before long we shall be enabled to realise the force of the American political doctrine that "federalism is strength."

Gentlemen, I do not propose to stand between you and your deliberations any longer, and before I ask you to elect your President you will permit me to accord to you once again on behalf of the British Indian Association our most hearty welcome to this Conference.

**Sir Provas Chandra Mitter Memorial Meeting at the Town Hall,
February 27, 1934.**

YOUR EXCELLENCY, MR. SHERIFF, LADIES AND
GENTLEMEN,

It is my privilege now to invite His Excellency the Governor of Bengal who has honoured us by his presence here to take the chair of this meeting. Gentlemen, it is under very mournful circumstances that we, the citizens of Calcutta, meet to-day in this historic hall. It is to mourn the loss of a distinguished countryman of ours. By sheer dint of ability and diligent work in the cause of his country and for the economic uplift of the people of this province Sir Provas Chundra Mitter raised himself to an eminent position in the estimation not only of ourselves, but of the Government of which he formed a part during the last fourteen years of his life, with but few intermissions. Ever since the inception of the reformed system of Government inaugurated under the auspices of the late Mr. Montagu and Lord Chelmsford, our friend formed an integral part of the Government of Bengal. Beginning his official career as a minister of His Excellency the Governor of Bengal in the department of Education, Sir Provas Chandra Mitter gradually worked his way into offices and departments, the importance of which makes it the bounden duty of His Excellency the Governor himself to keep within his own purview and control,—a department for the successful working

of which, we, the people of this province, the landlords and tenants alike, hold the Government responsible. As the revenue member of the Government of Bengal, his services have been held by the Government to have been invaluable. As Revenue Member of His Excellency's Government, Sir Provas Chundra Mitter was of the greatest service to the ryots and the Zemindars alike of this Province. It was because of his great knowledge of revenue affairs and of revenue administration, no less than of his tact and judgment, that he was able to help the Government of the province to stave off a financial deadlock at a time of depression. Gentlemen, we all remember the arduous fight that he carried on against the Meston Award which condemned Bengal, the richest province in India, to a state of perpetual helplessness and perhaps bankruptcy. It was he, who from his great knowledge of the revenue and financial system inaugurated under that iniquitous award who was able to place his finger upon the weak spot, so far as this fair province of ours is concerned. Before any body else could see and realise the enormity of the injustice which had been done to Bengal, under this arbitrary dispensation, Sir Provas Chundra Mitter raised his voice of protest. That the contention he put forward on behalf of the people of Bengal was sound and incontrovertible is proved by the fact of the Government of India, generously but readily revised in favour of Bengal the rigours of the award on the appearance of the slightest indication of financial stringency in our province. Gentlemen, the Government of India thereby gave Bengal a partial relief which was legitimately and morally due to her, and

I need hardly say that we are grateful to them. The bold and fearless manner in which he urged his case on behalf of the people of his province, in the Council and in the Cabinet, as also before the Government of India, commanded our admiration and won our gratitude. In my judgment it is one of the highest achievements of Sir Provas Chundra Mitter's public career, but that is not all. A yet another achievement, to the credit of Sir Provas Chundra Mitter, if it materialises in the near future, will be the readjustment of the jute duty and the income tax revenue derived in Bengal. These were the two items of financial readjustment which Sir Provas Chundra Mitter from his place in the two successive Round Table Conferences urged with a determination all his own. If Sir Provas Chundra Mitter opened the discussion on these two problems, the credit of having brought them within measurable distance of achievement belongs to our friend, who is present here this afternoon to mourn the loss of a dear friend who was a safe guide, a true friend and a genial and generous companion. Gentlemen, in this connection I will mention another name which stands out above every other as deserving our highest gratitude. It is that of His Excellency Sir John Anderson without whose wholehearted and resolute support nothing could have been achieved or can be achieved.

Sir Provas Chundra Mitter was a real worker in the cause of his motherland. A great liberal leader who was followed loyally and enthusiastically, he believed in solid work, and not in empty declarations which do but little service to the country. By his long

training in the service of the country Sir Provas Chundra Mitter earned the esteem of his countrymen and made himself a valuable guide to his friends and fellow countrymen, a true, faithful, reliable, and able interpreter of the needs and grievances of his people on the one hand, and the Government on the other. The loss that the country has sustained by his death at a time when the services, the knowledge and experiences of tried men, like Sir Provas Chundra Mitter are and ought to be in great demand will be almost irreparable. As a friend, Sir Provas was a true and genuine one. As a liberal leader and political guide, he was reliable. As a social being, his affability has seldom been equalled. We, the people of Bengal, Europeans and Indians, have lost in him a great countryman, a great friend and a great brother, and the Government, I make bold to say, has lost a valuable guide, an experienced counsel, and a great administrator.

We are grateful to His Excellency Sir John Anderson, who is present here at the meeting to do honour to the departed. I shall ask you gentlemen to join me in inviting him to preside over it. I have no doubt he will be graciously pleased to accede to our request. Gentlemen, with your permission I propose, that His Excellency Sir John Anderson do take the chair of this meeting.

**Presidential speech of Mr. P. N. Tagore at the Annual General
Meeting of the British Indian Association,
March 30, 1934.**

GENTLEMEN,

Before we close the year, you will permit me to place before you a few observations in explanation of the activities in which we have been engaged during the past year. Almost immediately after we opened our year, the Joint Select Committee of Parliament was announced to be gathering in London for the purpose of recording evidence of various persons, as to how far, or how little, of the provisions suggested in the White Paper could be safely adopted in the projected Constitution Act. Having regard to the great services rendered to Bengal, and the Hindu Community generally, by our friend Sir Nripendra Nath Sircar, in the previous, or the third Round Table Conference, we felt sure, that our interest would be well looked after by him. He represented Bengal on the Indian Delegation attached to the Joint Select Committee, and I may tell you that our anticipations were fully satisfied.

Congratulations to Burdwan.

Those of you, who have taken the trouble of going through the proceedings of the Committee will be convinced that our case could not have been put more ably than it had been by the Maharajadhiraj

Bahadur of Burdwan, who, in leading the case of the landholders did full justice to himself and to the interest of the landholding community in Bengal of which he is an ornament. Gentlemen, we feel grateful to the Maharajadhiraj Bahadur who placed the case particularly of the revenue paying permanently settled landlords with close reasoning. I have no doubt that he has created an impression upon the Committee which I hope will bear fruit in the shape of safeguarding what you may have legitimate fears about, namely, the encroachment upon the Permanent Settlement, if not the actual dismantling of it, even though, I cannot help observing that our valued moral and contractual rights have, more than once been interfered with by legislative vandalism. In this connection the part played by the British Indian Association has been considerable. The notes and memorandums which we submitted and circulated on behalf of the landlords are expected to have their due weight and effect, not only in our own interest in Bengal, but also, in the interest of our brothers in the province of Chota Nagpur whose case was entrusted to us to press before the Joint Select Committee.

Landlords misrepresented.

Gentlemen, a task of great difficulty before us during the past year, was that which impelled us to stem the tide of misrepresentation of the motives and actions of the landlords. A systematic campaign against them had been carried on in the country by a few interested persons, and you will imagine, that the undertaking of this task practically brought us in

the vortex of controversy. Without however, creating any bad blood anywhere such as such a controversy would be sure to give rise to, we were, by gentle persuasion and honest propaganda, able to silence what had threatened to create a mischievous prejudice in the minds of the people against the community to which we belong. In the pursuit of this task, we considered the various schemes of propaganda, not in our selfish interest, but in the interest of subsistence of happy relationship between the landlords and the tenants. Some of these may be placed before you for your consideration during the coming year. We feel, that it is imperative upon us now to let the world see that we are not half as bad as we have occasionally been painted by interested persons who desire to destroy what they cannot construct. I will not say more on this subject beyond that, it is a matter which ought to claim your most serious consideration when it comes before you, not as a temporary or opportune arrangement for any particular event, but as a permanent arrangement associated with the landlord community as a body.

Economic Depression.

Be that as it may, gentlemen, we cannot get away from the fact that the world, I will say our dear Province of Bengal above every other part of the world, is passing through an economic depression the like of which has never been felt within living memory. Gentlemen, I am confident all of you present here will bear me out. While we are so hard hit, we can only regret, and it is a matter of deep regret, that the

government of the province have not been hesitating in the application of legal remedies for the realisation of the exorbitant settlement costs. As you all know, whoever amongst you of the landowning class, who have had his estates cadastrally surveyed, how heavy the burdens of these survey and settlement operations have been. They are heavy as they are. We feel them to be heavier now that they have been foisted upon us at a time when our estates have touched practically the low watermark of realisations and recoveries. Gentlemen, a yet another incident which has greatly disappointed us is the refusal of the Government to allow the British Indian Association, to nominate one of their members on the Board of Economic Enquiry set up by them as their representative, such as other bodies have been empowered to do. Gentlemen, we do not grudge the right granted to them, but we do not yield that our claim is less important than theirs. We submitted our appeal to His Excellency the Governor of Bengal to whom are due the thanks of the entire people of Bengal, for having taken a bold and truly statesmanlike step in setting up a Board the activities of which may be fraught with immense consequences for the future of the country. Its usefulness however, will be measured by the amount of sympathy and co-operation it receives from the Government. It is not that we asked for this seat as a mark of recognition, but because of the fact that we are vitally interested in any enquiry that may be instituted into the economic condition of the country of which we, as landlords, form a very important factor. Our importance is not to be belittled, and we

feel grieved over the decision of the Government, though at our instance and insistence, an esteemed friend of ours, a Member of this Association, has been invited to join the Board. The nomination has been theirs, not ours. We will however, be very pleased to offer every assistance to the Government, and to the board, whenever our services should be required. While we appreciate the sincere desire His Excellency has evinced to help Bengal to prosper economically, we must not forget to congratulate him upon the signal success which has attended his efforts on our behalf to secure at least half the Jute duty, the entirety of which is legitimately and unquestionably claimable by Bengal, no matter what our brethern elsewhere may say, and how loud they may fulminate. For this concession, we are indebted to the Government of India, and particularly to Sir George Schuster, without whose determination to be sympathetic and equitable to the legitimate claims of Bengal, to a share at least of the Jute duty, things might have put on a different appearance. We are thankful for what we have got, but we shall be grateful when we have got the whole of it as a just and fair concession.

Common needs and grievances.

Gentlemen, during the past years we felt that it would serve a most useful purpose if we, landholders of the province, could meet together and discuss our common needs and grievances. For such purpose we took the opportunity of the presence of the Maharajadhiraj Bahadur of Burdwan in our midst during the last winter months and, of inviting an "All Bengal

Landholders' Conference," in which practically all the Landholders' Associations of the Province were represented. This Conference was presided over by the Maharajadhiraj Bahadur, and was addressed among others by the Maharajadhiraj Bahadur of Durbhanga, and by our lamented friend Sir Provas Chundra Mitter. The experience that we have gained by this Conference is of a valuable character. It helps the growth of brotherly sympathy and fellow-feeling among Zemindars, no matter to which part of Bengal or to which particular district they may belong. The Conference that we have held during the past year was so encouraging in its result, that we have decided to repeat the holding of similar conferences year after year, to enable us to create a common platform from which to adjust our common needs and to insist upon the redress of our common grievances.

Maharaja Jotendra Mohan Tagore Fund.

We availed ourselves of the presence here in Calcutta of the Maharajadhiraj Bahadur of Burdwan during the last winter months in another direction. It is in the matter of rescuing the fund lying fallow and idle to the credit of the Maharaja Sir Jotendra Mohan Tagore Memorial which was raised at the instance of the meeting of the citizens of Calcutta held in the Town Hall soon after his death over which the late Sir Andrew Fraser presided. People had forgotten all about the existence of the fund. Most of the members of the Committee entrusted with the custody and disposal of the fund had died, and we had considerable difficulty in getting together those who were still

among us of whom the Maharajadhiraj Bahadur was one. We got them to meet under the presidency of the Maharajadhiraj Bahadur and redeem the fund. They then decided and resolved that the fund, not a very large one in bulk, should be utilised in building up a library of political and economic literature, to be housed in the rooms of the British Indian Association, in book cases specially procured for the purpose, and named the "Maharaja Bahadur Sir Jotendra Mohan Tagore Memorial Collections." You will be pleased to know that these book cases are being procured with the generous assistance of some admirers of the late Maharaja Bahadur, not original donors of the Fund. The books have been ordered and I expect, they will soon adorn the rooms of this Association,—added to, let us hope, with later and further contributions from those of the late Maharaja Bahadur's other admirers who may help us.

The Cess Bill.

Two other outstanding problems to which our attention was specially directed during the past year was the Bengal Cess Amendment Bill on the working of which it is too early to say anything yet, one way or the other. But the report of the Jute Committee is not exactly a document of that category, on which opinion must needs be suspended for any future contingency whatsoever. It is a document of recommendations, of conflicting recommendations and of opposing suggestions by different groups, irreconcilable in their nature, to which I shall draw the earnest attention of your Committee and request them to study them from

their different viewpoints, one not less important than the other. They are the viewpoint of the landlord, the viewpoint of the tenant who cultivates and grows jute as a marketing commodity, and the viewpoint of the consumer. I have no doubt your Committee will in due course let us have the result of their study in the light of how far insistence should be made for a minimum price to be prescribed for jute, in the interest of the landlord and the tenant, just as has been recommended in the case of sugarcane. I, for one, gentleman, do not believe in the theory, uncharitably advanced so often, that because Jute is a crop in which the European Millowner is exclusively interested here and in England, for consumption exclusively in Europe, it should be dealt with differently from sugarcane, the consumption of which is confined exclusively to India, and in the production and manufacture of which there is, it is said, the undesirable Indian competition.

Land Mortgage Bank.

I am happy to report to you, that we have now taken a definite step forward towards the establishment of a Land Mortgage Bank in Bengal, a crying need of the province. Our Land Mortgage Bank Committee spared no pains in meeting, deliberating and evolving a practical working scheme which is now before the Government, on whose responsible member they waited an informal deputation in this connection, and with whom they propose further to negotiate with a view to arrive at a solution of the problem, such as would receive government support.

Woes of Behar.

Gentlemen, our hearts go out to our unfortunate countrymen who have been afflicted in Behar by Earthquake, the enormity of which has seldom been experienced in our history. Wide tracts of country, beautiful fields and nature's gardens have been converted by the hand of the Almighty into desert areas. From reports at your disposal, you will not have any difficulty to realise that the ravages made were more than the work of Earthquake. The whole country, thousands of square miles, were dug open as it were, upheaved, fissured and what not. The entire people of the country are doing the best for their stricken fellowmen. We, in this Association also are doing what we can. We sympathise with our brothers in their misfortune, and feel that the landlords of Behar deserve our highest commendation for the gallant and heroic manner in which they have come forward to help their afflicted and stricken tenantry.

Terrorist Bill.

The Terrorist Bill is about to find a permanent place on the Statute Book. It is stringent and drastic. It has no doubt created irritation in some quarters, perhaps disappointment more than irritation, but if it serves its purpose and kills terrorism once for all, the wisdom of launching it will be regarded to be unquestionable. There are conflicting opinions on the point, with none of which need we concern ourselves beyond that it is our earnest appeal to the Government to see that the severity of its administration does in no way touch the non-terrorist and the innocent.

Fairest judgment and closest discrimination ought to be the watchwords of those who will have the administration of it in their hands. That, to my mind, gentlemen, seems to be the surest method of attaining success in the administration of the measure. We hope for the best.

Gentlemen, last of all, I cannot, as the retiring President of this Association, let this opportunity pass without expressing our deep regret over the sudden and untimely death of Sir Provas Chundra Mitter who was all his life, a friend, philosopher, and guide of the Zemindars as a community. In him we have lost a valiant champion of our rights and privileges. In him we have lost a sagacious counsel, as the Government have lost an able and experienced administrator, whose name will remain fresh with most of us, who knew him and were associated with him.

Gentlemen, I cannot, afford to overlook the deep obligation I owe to my friends, the members of your committee who go out of office with me. To them I express my heartfelt gratitude for the loyal support they have always extended to me.

**Address delivered by Mr. P. N. Tagore, President, British Indian
Association in opening the Conference to consider ways
and means of how to combat terrorism in Bengal,
June 6, 1934.**

Bengal's lost position.

GENTLEMEN,

We meet here under very painful circumstances. The recent attempt upon the life of our Governor by some misguided youths has shocked the whole country. We, in this province are more than shocked. Gentlemen, we are ashamed of these youths of criminal mentality in our community, of those whose depraved conduct the other day at Darjeeling is a matter of national reproach. It is an indelible stigma on the good name of Bengal, the province, above all others, which by constitutional agitation has won for India what has been achieved to-day by way of political concessions. Gentlemen, Bengal has hitherto stood in the fore-front of political struggle in India. Our leaders who were respected and loved by the people of the country, and were held high in the estimation of their opponents, were those who hoisted aloft the banner of constitutional agitation. They believed in winning political concessions by constitutional means only. We, who are met here this afternoon have never believed in the efficacy of the cult of either the bomb or the revolver. We have said so times without

number, and we repeat it again. We have condemned the cult of the bomb and the pistol in unmeasured terms. The country has condemned it. Humanity has condemned it. It is difficult to conceive of any sane human being not condemning the activity such as we are met here to condemn.

Declining spirit of gratefulness.

Gentlemen, what is beyond my comprehension, and I am confident, must be beyond the comprehension of all friends whom I see around me, is that our reputation for gratefulness should be sullied and soiled by the depraved conduct of some of our youngmen, by an attempt on the life of one whose services to our province have been of a beneficent character. Their effects are far-reaching. Gentlemen, we cannot forget, without being ungrateful to His Excellency Sir John Anderson, the enduring services which he has been rendering to Bengal. Under his guidance we, in this province, hope for the first time, ever since the introduction of constitutional reforms, to be a financially self-sufficient province, without being a supplicant at the door of the Treasury at Simla and Delhi. Under his benign rule, for the first time in our history, we shall know the economic deficiencies and the economic possibilities of our province, which, if properly and considerately dealt with, and given free scope, will be able to give an account of herself, such as few provincial units in India will be able to give. Gentlemen, Sir John Anderson's accomplishments for Bengal hitherto have been of a high order, not of a bureaucratic nature. They are expressions of high statesman-

ship, and we, the people of Bengal, high and low, who have the real interest of the country at heart, who want to progress on constructive lines without being destructive or disruptive in our thought and action, have not the slightest hesitation in offering our support, to His Excellency in every direction of his multifarious administrative activities, all for the benefit of the people, and for the good and ordered Government of the Province.

Government must be strong.

Gentlemen, the Government of the province must be the first concern of an administrator, above everything else. Government exists for the people. The Government which neglects their interests, their safety, their well-being, and the progress of their social organisation deserves to perish. And if, by recent legislations Sir John Anderson proposed to achieve those ends he deserves our thanks, our admiration, and our gratitude, rather than a bullet in his heart or in his head from us, or any one in the country.

Abhorrence.

Gentlemen, words fail me to express the abhorrence I feel at the dastardly conduct of these youths. Little do they know, still less do they realise, the lasting damage they are doing to the political future of Bengal. If we are living to-day under restraint, every possible restraint, we have to thank these misguided youths for it, not the Government, who are always doing their best to discriminate the innocent from the guilty, or the politically diseased, in the administration of the recent legislations rendered

necessary by reason of the unending catalogue of sad and mournful events in this unfortunate province of ours.

Support for the Government.

Gentlemen, I feel it is our imperative duty to let the Government know, in terms unmistakeable and unequivocal, that we, the people of Bengal, landlords and tenants, are at their back, in their attempt to stamp terrorism out of the province by every legitimate means at their disposal. Gentlemen, terroristic activities have never done any country any good in world's history. What has been at the base of national advancements is political consciousness. Terrorism has never, in the history of the world, given birth or rise to political consciousness in a people, least of all in a country as vast as ours, and inhabited by peoples and communities so numerous as those we have in India. But gentlemen, these smack of sermons to those who are of a diseased mind, and I am fully persuaded to believe that sermons never convince those who are not already convinced. And yet I feel that much can be done through propaganda carried on systematically and determinedly, particularly among the youths of the country, that terrorism is not in the grains of the Hindu people, that it is opposed to the best instincts of the Hindu race, that it is opposed to the tenets of their religion, and that it is the worst reproach upon their culture. We should be prepared to strengthen the hands of the Government who have a well-laid out scheme of intensive drive against terrorism. Whenever we can, we should supplement

their scheme of distributing pamphlets, and organising lectures, shows and demonstrations to expose the evils and the futility of terrorist methods. To these I would add the broadcasting the benefits India has derived from British rule, by men who are neither politicians nor partisans, but scholars and historians, pure and simple, and independent of the Government. Gentlemen it is no use disguising the fact that these misdeeds on the part of some misguided youths have done incalculable mischief to our body-politic and have hampered our political progress. In proportion to the disrespect we show for the established authority and law in the land, in proportion to the unconstitutional means we adopt to achieve our political ends shall we stand behind the civilised nations of the world. I repeat again, that exactly in that proportion shall we be adjudged guilty before the bar of civilised humanity. There is undoubtedly some close association between unemployment and vicious deeds. An idle brain is the devil's own workshop. The problem of unemployment in Bengal and among Bengalee youths has got to be faced and tackled, for, I fully believe that lawless and terroristic activities will disappear with the growth of employment of the unemployed youths of Bengal. I shall therefore, ask you gentlemen to devote your attention to a solution of this problem, and if as a community, or as a class, we can be of any service in that direction we ought not to shirk it. We will only help the Government in its endeavour to stamp terrorism out of the country. To play such a part and to afford our youngmen opportunities to keep away from the immoral and unmoral path of terrorism, is a duty, our

supreme duty. They should be deflected from that dangerous course. The problem of unemployment is a serious problem in Bengal. It is getting more and more complicated every day. These are the problems before us. Difficult and thorny they may be but not, I hope, impossible of solution.

Steps to be devised.

In this Conference gentlemen, you are invited to consider what steps the country should take to convince all and sundry that the path to political enfranchisement is not through the bomb, nor through the revolver. It lies along the royal road of constitutionalism; not through subversive propaganda nor through terroristic activities. You have also to consider how best to help the Government of the country in its endeavour to put down what we are met here to deplore and condemn. Remember gentlemen, Government must go on, that is of primary importance; it is the supreme task; Government cannot be allowed to be dismayed or discomfited. That will be the negation of Government, the end of Government wherein lies a disaster the magnitude of which can be imagined better than described. I shudder to think of it. Gentlemen, you will therefore, apply your closest attention to the problems before us, and think out the most practical solution of them, ways and means by which we, each one of us here in this hall, and outside, may be of assistance to the Government whose object is to maintain order in the State, and to secure the safety of its people and officials, more than to preserve its power and authority unpunctured.

Gentlemen, with your permission and on your behalf I invite Maharaja Sashi Kanta Acharyya Chowdhury Bahadur of Mymensingh to preside over this Conference.

**Address delivered at the 50th Anniversary of the
death of Babu Kristo Das Pal,
July 24. 1934.**

Kristo Das Pal.

GENTLEMEN,

We are bidden to say nothing of the dead if we cannot say that which is good. And Kristo Das Pal, the 50th anniversary of whose death we are assembled here this afternoon to celebrate, is one such dead of whom nothing but good can be said, now or hereafter. Come of a stock, not above the rank of middle class, for full twenty years Kristo Das Pal dominated the public life of India, and of Bengal, more than of India. You will remember gentlemen, that it was not an easy task for one occupying his social status to have done what Kristo Das Pal did between 1862, when he took charge upon the death of that illustrious patriot Harris Ch. Mukherjee, of the "Hindu Patriot" and the day of his death in 1884, for he was not alone in the field of his activities. He was only one of a brilliant galaxy of men of unquestioned ability and undoubted genius. It was by sheer dint of ability, devotion to duty, and forceful character that Kristo Das Pal pushed himself to the forefront in the public life of Bengal.

His achievements.

The highest achievements of Kristo Das Pal were however, as one connected with the British Indian

Association in company of outstanding personalities, such as Raja Dr. Rajendra Lal Mitter, Raja Digumber Mitter, Maharaja Rama Nath Tagore, Babu Prosonna Coomar Tagore, Babu Ram Gopal Ghose, Babu Joy Kissen Mukherjee and Maharaja Durga Churn Law. It was at his desk in the British Indian Association that Kristo Das Pal rendered the most valuable services to his country, and to the cause of both the landlords and their tenants.

Compared with Disraeli.

Like Benjamin Disraeli, Kristo Das Pal was a man of the people. Like the great Prime Minister of England, the rival of Palmerston and Gladstone, and the successor of Derby, Kristo Das's sympathies were with the people, for, born of the people, and trusted by the people, they could not be anywhere else. Kristo Das Pal, the man of genius, sprang from the noble stock of the middle class of Indian people, that stock which has produced great men in all ages, and in all countries, in all spheres of useful activity, became by the tide of circumstances and the necessities of the situation the leader of a great party composed mainly of the aristocracy of Bengal. The masterful personality of Kristo Das achieved for himself what Disraeli did in the political history of England. The homage that we pay to Kristo Das is a homage paid not to rank or to office, for, he had neither. We pay our homage to genius, virtue and character. The qualities which raised him to distinction are the qualities which have always achieved fame and honour in life. With great industry, he combined

great sagacity, and a transparent honesty of purpose. His capacity for work was simply marvellous as his mastery of details excited the admiration of all who came in contact with him.

Gentlemen, the life of Kristo Das Pal was not a life of adventure. It was not a life of baffled hopes, nor of renewed efforts. He had no extravagant schemes, nor was he impetuous in action. Never in his life, did he do an act, or utter a word, to which exception could be made by his bitterest enemy, who, by the way, never existed. Not a word or an act of his requires to be defended. It was a beautiful life,—a pure, spotless, modest, serene life which was never for one moment agitated by passion or betrayed by self interest into error or indiscretion.

Gentlemen, I offer my humble reverence to the memory of Kristo Das Pal on this the 50th anniversary of his death.

**Address delivered by Mr. P. N. Tagore
at the Sanatan Hindu Conference.
July 25, 1934.**

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I do not know how adequately to thank you for the great honour you have done me by calling me to this chair which has, before me, been filled by men far worthier than myself. When I accepted your invitation, I confess, I was oppressed by a sense of personal inferiority to those distinguished gentlemen who have preceded me in this chair. But conscious as I am, of your valued support in directing the proceedings of this Conference, the Conference of those who have no political axe to grind, or political cause to advance, but whose one mission is not to let the sanctity of their forefather's religion be desecrated, nor let the ancient, and even, prehistoric traditions and customs of Hindu Society be broken in upon, I felt that it was my imperative duty to co-operate with you, and join my voice of protest with yours, feeble though it is, against what threatens to be the most potent force to undermine our religion and to disintegrate our social order.

Evil effect of the Temple Entry Bill.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are met here to-day to express our disappointment at the attempt of a few

among us, to strike at the very root of the structure of Hindu Society by legislation. The Bill before the Legislative Assembly is of a far-reaching character. There is nothing more sacred in our Society than our customs, customs which are founded upon ancient and immemorial usages having the sanction of Hindu Law. The influence of customs on the personal law of the Hindu is great, has always been great, and should not be permitted to grow less. Temple entry is a question which depends upon the rules of the caste and habits of life. Admittedly the institutions, the temples, were established for the spiritual benefit of the Hindu community in general, or for particular sects or sections of it. This latter is the general rule, and I do not know of any such institution which prescribes free admission to all those who profess the Hindu religion. Of these temples the Hindu Sastras look upon the worshippers as the beneficiaries, though, only in a spiritual sense, and this principle is well grafted in the personal laws of the Hindus, the inviolability of which it has always, ever since the inception of British Rule in India, been the one great object of the Government to maintain. Hindu temples being religious institutions are founded, endowed, and maintained, for the benefit of those sections of the Hindu community who conform to certain recognised usages as those of the castes, and of those for whose benefit the temples are by immemorial usage dedicated as places of worship. This view has been recognised by judicial tribunals on innumerable occasions.

Custom and usage considered supreme.

The validity of custom and usage gentlemen in Hindu law is undoubted and accepted by the highest judicial and juristic authorities. "Indian Law", says Sir Henry Maine, "may be in fact affirmed to consist of a very great number of local bodies of usage, and of one set of customs reduced to writing, pretending to a diviner authority than the rest, exercising consequently a great influence over them, and tending, if not checked, to absorb them. You must not understand that these bodies of custom are fundamentally distinct. They are all marked by the same general features; but there are considerable differences of detail."

Custom in British Courts.

I will therefore draw your attention with all the earnestness I command, to the fact that the fullest effect had always been given to the custom, both by the courts of British India, and by British Indian legislation, except where it had been abandoned by consent of the parties concerned, or found to be immoral in practice. The judicial committee of the Privy Council in the Ramnad case went so far as to say: "Under the Hindu system of law, clear proof of usage will outweigh written text of the laws," and all enactments point to the fact that administration of law in British India, where a Hindu or a Mahomedan is concerned, is based upon usage, unless it has been definitely abandoned, or actually declared to be void and of no effect.

The matter of temple entry, I maintain gentlemen, is one such usage which has become a part of the

personal law of the Hindus, and a part of the status of every family or community which is governed by it. Any legislation to which the Government, giving the founder's prescription a different course from what he, the founder of the temple, desired, no less than the trust connected with it, would be a piece of sacrilege before which the Sarda or the Gour Act, both of which violate or reduce into profanity clear and sacred injunctions of law would pale into insignificance. Trusts of the Hindu temple establishments are irrevocable, because, and when they are perfectly created, and as such, their administration cannot be differently directed, at any rate by legislation. In this view gentlemen, I maintain that the Government in this country are powerless. Early in their rule, the British Government in India recognised the important duty of insisting that endowments for pious and religious purposes should be applied to the real intent and the will of the grantor, and Regulation XIX of 1810 was the beneficent outcome of this conviction from which it would be politically unwise and morally unsound for it to depart as the protector of the faiths, professions, usages and customs of the Indian people, Hindus and Mahomedans, Jains, and Zoroastrians and Christians alike.

Political aspect of the Temple Entry problem.

Let us now gentlemen, consider for one moment the political aspect of the problem. I do not know of any item of the great Proclamation of Her Majesty Queen Victoria, of more vital importance to the people of this great country, mainly Hindus and Mahomedans, who have always taken the Proclamation to be the great

charter of their Liberty and Security, than that in which Her Majesty held out, "We hold Ourselves bound to the natives of Our Indian territories by the same obligations of duty which bind Us to all Our other subjects and these obligations by the blessings of Almighty God, We shall faithfully and conscientiously fulfil." In these words, gentlemen you will realise lies embedded the whole idea of English Sovereignty. The tie between a sovereign and people is essentially that of duty; it is neither despotic force, nor traditional authority. It is not kinship of race either. In the fulfilment of that duty the government subsists. The obligations of duty which Her Majesty declared was her purpose to carry out were not left obscure or indefinite. They were the same which bound the sovereign of England to all her other subjects, the same which bound her to Englishmen whose proudest boast like that of the Apostle is that they are free-born. That is not all. Her Majesty went further when she said, "that firmly relying Ourselves on the truth of Christianity and acknowledging with gratitude the solace of religion, We disclaim alike the right and desire to impose Our Convictions on any of Our subjects; We declare it to be Our royal will and pleasure that none be in any wise favoured, none molested or disquieted by reason of their religious faith or observances, but that, all alike shall enjoy the equal and impartial protection of the law; and We do strictly charge and enjoin all those who may be in authority under Us that they abstain from all interference with the religious belief or worship of any of Our subjects on pain of Our highest displeasure." I maintain, gentlemen, that

this is an injunction, the imperative character of which is enough to satisfy the Government, that the measure which is pending before the Assembly, is one which ought to be summarily rejected, as being in direct contravention to the healthy principle of administration laid down by our great Queen, that none should be favoured, or molested or disquieted by reason of religion. That this principle forms part of the public law of England is known to you all. After considerable deliberation our Sovereign pledged that law to the Hindu as to Mussalman, and, in doing so, she simply carried out her declaration that she was bound to the natives of India by the same obligations as to her other subjects. In enjoining all who might be in authority under her in India, that they abstain from all interference with the religious belief or worship of any of her subjects, she did all that was necessary for her to do to carry out her intention. It was a pious intention; it was a high and noble determination. She announced simply and solemnly that no civil authority shall be used in India, as it may not be used in England, for purposes, of religious propaganda.

The problem and the Hindu Community.

In the absence of a direct unanimous mandate from the Hindu Community on the problem of throwing open the doors of the sacred temples of India, and the question being made a direct election issue, the forcing open the doors of the sacred temples of India by legislative measures, rather than by the force of public opinion, instructed by a better standard of education, improvement in the mode of life, and above

all, by a consensus of Hindu opinion, will be as injudicious as it will be unwise in the present political temper of India. The action of the Government in allowing the matter to be agitated at all under their auspices is liable to be misconstrued by the great bulk of the Hindu Community who have hitherto been loyal subjects of the Crown, and, as such, feel entitled to the protection of the Government. We plead therefore, that the Government will be pleased to refuse sanction to the introduction of the Bill, which has been applied for, and thus protect Hindu religion from an unwarranted attack, prompted by political considerations.

The Poona Pact.

Gentlemen, the next question of vital importance to the community to which we all belong, is the problem of how far the Pact which has acquired a notoriety, the so-called Poona Pact, is for the benefit of the Hindu Society, at any rate in Bengal. Here is a scrap of paper which, I am told, must be held to be sacred—a sacrosanct. I feel inclined to question those who plead for the sanctity of this paper, if a document obtained upon threat and coercion, can, from any standpoint, be held to be sacred. Consider it from any point of view, whether legal or moral, and even political, I do not hesitate for one moment to relegate that piece of paper into the waste paper basket. Mahatma Gandhi suggested sometime ago, that his position was quite clear, and that he was wholly uninterested in the number of seats reserved for untouchables or depressed classes. Such an observation naturally would be followed by a

question from us, "where then was the necessity for a Pact, if it was not for the reservation of seats and for cutting the Hindu community of Bengal into two halves." My own impression is that the supporters of the Pact lose sight of the fact that they admit what has never existed in our province of Bengal, at any rate, not within our memory. In this province, we have never been troubled with the problem which offends against political ethics in other provinces. Here, for political and official spoils, the Hindu Community *vis a vis* the depressed classes have never stood face to face with each other. If anything, they have always agreed to share the spoils of victory and the gains of triumph among themselves without reference either to caste or religion. Here, the Hindu community as a community has throughout shown a sense of political consciousness which is commendable in itself, and commended by such critical authorities as both the Montagu-Chelmsford Report and the Simon Commission. Where in the whole history of our provincial legislature, or of the central legislature, has a qualified candidate been rejected, simply by reason of the fact that he belonged to the so-called depressed classes. Where in the entire history of Indian legislation, have the interests of one community or class been sacrificed for the benefit of another predominant or powerful community? Where throughout the pages of our political history, is there an instance of diversity of political interests being urged by communities or classes at the sacrifice of national interests, until Mahatma Gandhi chose to draw the red-herring across the path of our political advancement on a fateful day

at Poona? I assert gentlemen, that the influence and importance which the Hindus, particularly the caste Hindus have acquired by reason solely of their superior culture, education and economic strength has never been employed for their class aggrandisement as opposed to the interests of the entire community, in fact of the entire people of the province, Hindus and Mahomedans, of whatever class or description. On the contrary, evidence is not wanting to show that some of the ablest among our political leaders, whether on the platform or in the senate, have been of the community which prefers, but is ill-advised, to call itself the depressed class. We, Sanatanists have followed them with confidence and have never felt that in our political struggles or in our social functions we are a class apart from them; that their interests, social or political, even religious, are not those of ours. But gentlemen, behind all this imbroglio lie hidden the hands which are willing to strike but afraid to wound. It was given out from high and mighty quarters with a good deal of gusto that our own Dr. Rabindra Nath Tagore was there to offer his blessings to this scrap of paper, an event in our history which throws into cold shade even the tales of the Arabian Nights. We lived to discover from no less a person than Dr. Tagore himself, that he was there in his individual capacity, to offer his blessings upon the Mahatma himself, more than upon any document he had artfully and under threat and coercion extracted from unwilling parties. One solitary gentleman among the Hindus of Bengal, a distinguished medical Practitioner of this city, who represents the Hindu community of Bengal no more

than the man in the moon, was invited to be present. Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy owes an explanation to all of us as to how he managed to send over to Poona as the sole representative from Bengal a friend of his, not a caste Hindu, whose antipathy to the Hindu community is well known, and to keep the invitation back, carefully secreted from the rest of the community. Where was the necessity for this hide and seek, unless it was the deliberate object of the promoters of the 'Fast unto death,' to join hands with the leaders from other provinces in their desire to let Bengal down. In this respect I desire with your permission to offer our sincere congratulations to certain friends, notably to Sir N. N. Sircar and to Mr. B. C. Chatterjee, who have done yeoman's service to your cause. Gentlemen, we are told by Mahatma Gandhi himself that he maintains an open mind. If that is so, I appeal to him to examine, critically if he likes, for I know he does not look to them sympathetically or face them, the various documents and pamphlets beginning from Sir N. N. Sircar's pamphlets on the Communal Award, and see if his mind which is said to be open gets a light. But gentlemen, sermons have never convinced anybody except those who are already convinced. They fail to penetrate the closed, almost sealed lid of the mind alleged to be open. And if even with such a mind he comes to Bengal to bring union from disunion of his creation, in our province I shall be the first to receive him with open arms. If not, on your behalf I shall declare that he is not wanted here. We will not permit him to introduce further chaos in our home affairs. If he can bring

cosmos from the chaos he created, let him come, if not, we say "you are not wanted here, we will set our house in order, if there should be anything wrong in it. We will look to our affairs in spite of you."

The two outstanding problems.

Gentlemen, these are the problems which we are met here to consider and discuss. In doing so, I have no doubt, you will exercise your best endeavours to offer constructive suggestions which will help to unite the communities, the partition of which is the sole and principal object of both the problems, arising out of the Temple Entry Bill and the Poona Pact. Neither has the sanction of the community at large; they are both problems on which *ex parte* decisions have been recorded, or proposed to be recorded, but the fact remains, that mere protest does not and cannot furnish any solution of the problems difficult as they are. We must all combine to think out the wisest solution of the problems with which we are confronted for, upon it, I am led to believe, will depend the future well-being of the Hindu race.

Ladies and gentlemen, before I resume my seat I beg to offer you again my very hearty thanks for the great honour you have done me by calling me to this chair to fill which I repeat again I do not consider myself fully worthy. I do not propose, gentlemen, to stand in the way of your deliberations any longer.

**Opening Speech of Mr. P. N. Tagore convening the
Anti-Terrorist Conference.
September 15, 1934.**

GENTLEMEN,

On behalf of the Anti-terrorist Committee and the British Indian Association, with whom every distinguished body in this city has heartily co-operated, it is my proud privilege to welcome you, who have taken pains to come, from different parts of the province to this Conference, to consider and discuss a problem of vital importance to our political and social well-being. You have readily responded to our invitation, short though it was, some, I imagine, at great personal inconvenience, but your presence here in such larger number testifies to your determination to support and co-operate with the Government in their endeavour, to devise means to stamp out a sore malady from our body-politic. We have fallen upon evil days, and it is our duty now to stand by the Government, as it is the duty of the Government to protect us as much as themselves.

Condemnation of Terrorism.

Gentlemen, not very long ago the country and its leaders, individually and unitedly, condemned in unmistakable terms what is recognised now to have become a malady among a set of misguided youths. It is the cult of terrorism. We meet here to-day, in this Conference, in which all interests are represented, to

consider how best to check the growth of it. To that end I am happy to tell you, that the best minds of the country are agitating themselves, and very rightly so, for, it is recognised by one and all, that the vicious misdeeds which have been, or attempted to be, perpetrated, are those which have tarnished the reputation of Bengal.

Gentlemen, these diabolical deeds which have been perpetrated in the name of patriotism or nationalism, have no more advanced the objects before us, our national uplift and our political enfranchisement, than the misdeeds of the lawless do. The problem, therefore, which we, in this Conference have set before us, is how to check the mania of assassination which has never in history, in any part of the world, been known to have brought about political advancement or regeneration to a nation struggling for it.

True, the actions, motives, policies and decisions of the Government are sometimes misconstrued. For that the entire blame cannot, to my mind, be laid at the door of the people. Government themselves are as much responsible for it as the people who are alleged to misconstrue them, and thus provide materials for those who have brought about a situation which calls for the holding of this Conference. Government should be well-advised to take the people into their confidence, at any rate, the leaders of thought and opinion in the country, who deplore and condemn these incidents of terrorism as much as anybody else.

Grave Problem.

One of the first things which strikes me to be at the root of the problem is that, the system upon which

our youths are educated is not what makes for a better type of citizen, in whom assassination or terrorism, or anything pertaining to it, must arouse a feeling of abhorrence. Education, which is not based upon religious or moral injunctions, has but little value in the actual building up of the character of our youths, to which I am constrained to observe with regret, the teachers of our educational institutions have hitherto contributed little or nothing. Gentlemen, if Richardson and Derozio were great, if Vidyasagar and Peary Churn were distinguished, it is because they contributed a substantial share towards the building up of the character of men who played a prominent part in the history of our country, who built up the University, who built up the great colleges in and round Calcutta, who made the legal profession the highest ambition of success of every educated man in the country, who raised the medical profession to a pitch of high eminence, who made the science and literature of Bengal renowned all over the world, and who created a public life second to none anywhere else in honour, integrity and ability. The relation between the teacher and the taught ought to be improved and lifted from the mechanical platform to the holy and sacred status of personal contact and relationship. If, for this purpose it should be necessary for us to have teachers with a personality such as Peary Churn Sircar and Girish Chandra Deb, Bhola Nath Pal and Rasamoy Mitter had, by all means let us have them, those who should assiduously lay the foundation for University teachers later on to build upon.

There is another point in our educational curriculum which strikes me as egregiously defective. It is the lack of education in good citizenship, which should infuse into the young man the ideals of patriotism also. We are all thoroughly agreed that what India most needs to-day, is a thorough comprehension of the duties and obligations of each and every Indian citizen, be he a European or an Indian. There has been a great deal of talk of teaching Indians how to be true citizens without any serious or systematic attempt being ever made at that.

Responsibilities of Citizenship.

What are the responsibilities of citizenship? We hardly ever think out for ourselves the principles of Indian citizenship. I believe that good citizenship and patriotism, one not opposed to the other in any sense, can be taught through books, and in the class rooms, as much as history and literature, and philosophy and economics. There is no more effective way of combating either terrorism or communism than by laying a broad foundation of knowledge concerning our constitutional government, the corner-stone of education in good citizenship.

What is needed is education and propaganda to inculcate ideals of true and good citizenship. And will you believe it that the "Rights and Duties of Citizens" are taught in America and in other European countries with as much care as any other subject having a commercial or literary value? Following their methods, cannot our teachers and professors create and hold "Study Circles" of their students where moral,

religious and healthy historical and political ideas may be inculcated and, through the members, disseminated to a wider circle of their friends and relations?

Unemployment Problem.

There is a general belief that terrorism is the outcome of unemployment. It is difficult to believe that it is wholly the result of unemployment, for, our experience shows that most of those who have hitherto been guilty of it are not those who had been affected by the problem of unemployment. They are differently situated. But undoubtedly in the solution of the difficult problem of unemployment lies the partial, if not the entire, solution of the terrorist problem. We, Bengalees, are here in our own province, on sufferance. If our clerks are drawn from Southern India, our cooks and servants and mistries from neighbouring provinces, as our drivers and mechanics from Northern India and our Mill-hands from upcountry, the Bengali Hindu or Mahomedan has no place outside his home province. In all other provinces we are banned and the doors of unemployment in them all are banged against us. Would you believe, gentlemen, that in the city of Bombay the Commissioner of Police makes it a rule never to issue motor-driving license to one who is not a native of the Presidency, and take it from me that the same rule applies to Madras, and to the States whose subjects make their piles in Bengal and in the remotest corners of our province. Gentlemen, if the Governments of other provinces and States encouraged the interests of their provincials and subjects elsewhere, it was eminently desirable and necessary for our

Government to have taken steps to protect ours, here more than anywhere else. Go where you like, to the beautiful cities of Rajputana, to the hilly tracts of Central India, or in pretty Guzerat and Kathiawar, you find magnificent palaces and other certain indications of unheard-of prosperity in hot, dry and barren lands,—all the result of successful exploitation of Bengal. Even now we find the largest employers of labour in Bengal drawing their labour resources from outside the province. And here European concerns could do much to alleviate the rigours of the problem and lead the way. We suggest that the Government should set about remedying this state of affairs without delay, if necessary by legislation. Solution of this problem will undoubtedly render the work you have before you easy of achievement. The country is faced with acute economic problems, towards the solution of which the people feel that little or nothing has hitherto been done. What is really wanted is a searching of hearts and a determination to boldly face the situation to remedy it, when upon such searching you have discovered where the canker lay. Gentlemen, as a humble citizen of the Empire, I will expect my countrymen to boldly lay their grievances before the Government on whom rests the responsibility, if they are true to themselves, to boldly deal with them, not to shield or shelve, but to expose and punish. And it will further be conceded that if terrorism is found and judged to have a political outlook, the satisfaction of the hopes and aspirations of the people would undoubtedly be an effective antidote. I am glad to think that our Government realises this, and we learn from no less a person than His

Excellency Lord Willingdon himself who told us the other day that His Majesty's Government was doing everything possible to speed up the constitutional reforms so as to satisfy our legitimate hopes and aspirations as citizens of the Empire. Delay in such circumstances worsens the situation no less than an illiberal spirit. In case of India, perhaps, both are equally responsible.

Finally, I would appeal to my own countrymen who are responsible for such atrocities as have been perpetrated in the past, to consider the miseries brought on the people of the country, great many of them their own kith and kin, by their wicked deeds. The mis-directed activities of these youngmen, some of whom, I believe, under proper guidance would prove to be valuable members of society and fine specimens of manly character, have been responsible for untold troubles and tribulations patiently suffered by their innocent and beloved fathers and mothers, and dear brothers and sisters. Gentlemen, that is not all ; there is yet another aspect from which the result of their conduct must be judged. It is the economic loss to the province which is so dear to us all. Imagine the amount of nation-building work which could be pursued by our own Ministers if the monies, unprecedented in their magnitude, spent for the maintenance of law and order, were released to-morrow as no longer of any necessity. This is a vital consideration, and I cannot impress it too strongly upon them.

Gentlemen, we are grateful, that you have so readily responded to our invitation to this Conference which sets before it a very difficult task, to find the

remedy for the cult of terrorism prevalent in Bengal, and go about to carry out the plan you devise to that end. Gentlemen, I have only suggested an outline of some plans. You will in your wise deliberations exhaust them all and explore all avenues for the benefit of the country.

I shall now ask you, gentlemen, to choose your own President.

**Address delivered as Chairman of the Reception Committee of
the Second All-Bengal Landholders' Conference.**

December 23, 1934.

MAHARAJADHIRAJA BAHADUR, BROTHER ZAMINDARS AND
GENTLEMEN,

Before we begin the business of the day, it is my duty, by your leave, to extend our cordial welcome to His Excellency the Viceroy to our city, and to His Excellency Sir John Anderson back to his post, the post which our Governor has adorned with remarkable courage, sympathy and goodwill. We fervently pray that health may be spared them, that they may discharge the difficult task of inaugurating the new Constitution and give us the benefit of their counsel and guidance at the inception.

It is a matter of the highest gratification to me to be privileged to welcome you all in this second All-Bengal Landholders' Conference this afternoon. It was in this hall and under the presidency of my friend, the Maharajadhiraja Bahadur of Burdwan, that we met last year in the first All-Bengal Landholders' Conference, to discuss questions of vital importance to the problems before the country, particularly those which should conduce to the improvement of the agricultural situation, and the general welfare of the province. Gentlemen, I feel convinced that it was a welcome move on our part to have decided to hold these Conferences

year after year, for, undoubtedly they help us to clarify our ideas and decide our course of action for the benefit of all. Very properly the Conference gave a distinct lead to many knotty problems, - some of which have begun to be tackled either by the Government, or by ourselves, but the problem which, above everything else, shows no signs of improvement is the economic problem under which the country is groaning for the last few years.

Economic Depression.

It is a melancholy fact that economic depression, through which the country is passing, shows no visible signs of improvement, at any rate in the near future. The agriculturists have kept making defaults in payment of rents, resulting in their landlords being hit very hard. Our responsibility to the Exchequer remains unrelaxed and unabated while arrears of rent are growing year by year. Unless speedier and more effective methods of realisation of arrears of rents are devised, the doom of the landholding community could not be averted or deferred long. That is the reason why we desired the introduction of the Garnishee system in our province, that is the reason why the need for certificate power is felt to be an important necessity to-day. They, however, let me remind you, are not all. By themselves they do not bring us the relief we want, namely, quick disposal and speedy execution. It is only a Rent Court with powers of prompt execution which can give the relief we landlords want.

Gentlemen, when we are being knocked down for arrears of revenue, a problem which has caused heavy

deterioration in our purchasing power, we learn with dismay and disappointment that the Board of Economic Enquiry is considering the propriety of suggesting and recommending to Government a legislative measure whose object should be to bring arrears of rent down to the level of ordinary debts, and deprive it of its character as a first charge. Under the Tenancy Act, rent is a first charge and we have every right to sell the defaulter's estate free from encumbrances for arrears of rent. The Economic Board is trying to rob the sanctity of rent, an event which should revolutionise the entire conception and upset the basis of landlordism in Bengal. Against such insidious attempts we lodge our strong protest.

The Remedy.

Gentlemen, it is also true that if we want to be relieved of the problem of economic depression, it has to be devised how agriculture could be made a paying business and how better and further avenues of employment could be found for our own provincials. No recovery plan can be effective unless we take these into due consideration. The State should plan their efforts with due recognition of the economic formula of better employment, better living, better farming and better marketing, for the benefit first and last of our own men. The agriculturists need funds, and it is for funds that they go to money-lenders. Unless the agriculturists' holdings could be made economic, economic regeneration of the agricultural conditions in the province will be a far cry. I have watched with concern the activity of a plethora of uninformed and theoretic

publicists in our province who have sedulously kept fanning the flame of disunion between the landholders and ryots in the matter of division of proprietary rights, conveniently manœuvring to side-track real issues, leaving genuine sores unattended to. I am definitely of opinion that the protection of land should be of primary concern to both the landlord and the tenant; upon its development depends the prosperity of both. But irresponsible agitators have so confounded the issues as to create none but ill-feeling between the two and a feeling of general animosity towards vested interests. Their misrepresentation has given rise to activities calculated to breed class hatred, forgetful of the interests in the cultivators' holdings, in the preservation of which lies the effective remedy for agricultural degeneration. I regret the confounding of the issues; it keeps us back from approaching the right solution of the problem.

Nationalisation of Zamindaries.

The slogan of the "nationalisation of zamindaries" is in the air. Nationalisation of zamindaries would prove to be most prejudicial to the ryots, not to the zamindars, unless by nationalisation its protagonists mean expropriation pure and simple. It is a matter of public knowledge that the ryots under the permanently settled zamindars have the best of rights and privileges, and I can put this to our friends as a challenge, that under no system of state-landlordism, however scientific and well-organised it may be, the ryots do enjoy half the privileges they are enjoying now in the matter of the rate of rent, and payment thereof.

I would like to know of any other system of land tenure whereunder the average rate of rent of the majority of ryots having similar fertile lands as are found in our province is a little over Rs. 3/- per acre.

Gentlemen, the movement that we find against the land system of our province is nursed by sheer misrepresentation, and it is our bounden duty to help to dissipate by reflecting upon it the light of understanding. The task is far from easy, but has to be faced and tackled; difficulties are to be overcome. In my view, we should encourage the publication of literature, giving unprejudiced view of the land system; we should place before the public genuine needs of the ryots; we should also see that the economic structure of rural Bengal is not in any way shattered beyond repair. Gentlemen, personally I will not regret the day when lands in the hands of the zamindars of the province are nationalised such as has been done in Ireland within living memory upon payment of adequate compensation to the landlord. Upon such basis, gentlemen, I should be a most ardent advocate of nationalisation of lands and upon no other.

Jute Restriction.

Gentlemen, the Jute Restriction, by which I mean restriction of cultivation of jute of which you have heard so much, is a device which, as suggested by the Government, should bring about an improvement in the situation. The idea no doubt is based upon the law of supply and demand and cannot be said to have been decided upon a day too soon, by my friend the Hon'ble

Nawab K. G. M. Farouqui, our Minister of Agriculture, in whose mind the condition of the hapless ryots of Bengal is ever present and is of supreme consideration, though one may be permitted to entertain his *bona fide* doubts about the ultimate success of this otherwise commendable proposition calculated to bring material prosperity to the grower, the silent tiller of the soil, who has patiently and with resignation suffered to be exploited all these years. Voluntary restriction in itself is a capital idea, but it presupposes three conditions to be a success; education of the grower sufficient to realise where his best interests lay, patriotism in your own men not to utilise him to serve selfish ends, and a determination on the part of the authorities to see that none but a fair deal receives either their sanction or encouragement. I have no doubt, that under Sir John Anderson's regime the last will be scrupulously observed by his officers on pain of incurring his severest displeasure, but the other conditions are those over which His Excellency, whom the people of the province have learnt to look upon as the friend of the poor, the weak, the suffering and the exploited, can exercise no control or direction of any sort. To my mind, legislation coupled with fixation of a minimum price of jute is the only recourse to an effective check on heedless over-production of jute in the country. Be that as it may, gentlemen, we landholders of all-Bengal, desire to appeal to His Excellency's Government to leave no loop-hole for the benefit of this most sympathetic and benevolent measure to go to or be monopolised by anybody other than the grower himself.

Report.

Gentlemen, I cannot conceal from myself the fact that the report—I mean the report of the Joint Parliamentary Select Committee on the White Paper, for which we had been waiting for months in breathless anxiety, and into which we dived immediately upon its publication on the 22nd of November last, for days together, for inspiring stimulation, is disappointing. I will not say that it is unacceptable, for I believe in co-operation, in the spirit of the great Raja Ram Mohan Roy, and in our own day of the astutest statesmen of our time Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Gopal Krishna Gokhale and Sir Surendra Nath Banerjee, but it is disappointing even though it recognises that India has a case for movement forward. The scheme of Government set out in the Report strikes me as one which has kept the British standpoint prominently in view. Perhaps that is not unnatural, but to our misfortune, the Indian point of view has been laboriously kept in the background. Indian viewpoint, Indian aspirations have been overshadowed by an over-powering desire, an irresistible determination on the part of the powers that be not to let go their hold upon every aspect of Indian administration, Indian life and Indian activity.

Dominion Status.

Gentlemen, there is another point of vital importance which all those who have carefully gone through the pages of the Report cannot have failed to notice. It is the scrupulous, almost studied avoidance of any reference to what we have, ever since the King Emperor's announcement in 1921, on the occasion of

the inauguration of the Central Legislature, been accustomed to regard as the ultimate political goal of India, namely Dominion Status to be attained in the near future as an equal partner in the Empire. Gentlemen, that is not all. Since the announcement by His Majesty, repeated assurances have been given us of the attainment of the status on behalf of the Imperial Government by the Prime Minister, and with the authority of His Majesty, by his Viceroy in India. The omission of any reference to our future status is, to my mind, significant, in that it seizes hold of one's mind with the idea that the Government, as at present constituted has not the courage of a Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman to formulate and adopt a bold statesmanlike policy of reconstruction of the Government in India so as to allow her to enjoy the best results of British rule along with the rest of the dominions. The implications of this omission are a disturbing factor in our mind, though I am prepared to believe, that it is due to the fact that the problems of defence and foreign relations must for sometime yet remain where they are. We are concerned about the absence of any substantial reference to or reliance upon the advent of responsible Government, hopes of which the far more generous and far-seeing Report of the Statutory Commission over which Sir John Simon presided, raised in us. "Our conception," said Sir John Simon, "of the eventual future of India is a sisterhood of States, self-governing in all matters of purely local or provincial interest . . . over this congeries of States would preside a Central Government, increasingly representative of and responsible to

the people of all of them, dealing with matters, both internal and external of common interest to the whole of India, acting as arbiter in inter-state relations, and representing the interest of all India on equal terms with the self-governing units of the British Empire.” The Joint Parliamentary Committee could not have set before them a higher, a nobler ideal to guide them in the work of constitution framing, and one wonders how sadly they failed in their achievement. Gentlemen, personally I would sooner like to be installed on the basis of the Simon Report than be given the dole in the present Report, and I have always thought, it was a mistake on the part of my countrymen to have attempted to scrap it. The adoption of that Report, would take us to our goal, it may not be in the immediate future, but not in the distant future either.

Constitution.

The constitution as outlined in the Report is a rigid one. It is rigid to a fault and I wonder, gentlemen, at the eagerness of the Joint Committee to give us a Constitution the inflexibility of which may effectively prevent expedient changes, disturbing an otherwise calm and tranquil political atmosphere and provoking unnecessary discontent. In the constitution as outlined in the Report no door has been left open for statesman and the Indian public to turn their attention to such changes as may be found advisable, desirable and expedient. We shall always be faced with the inconvenient question of the legality of a problem for a satisfactory solution of which it will always be hard to find a proper, qualified and unbiassed

authority. Minute and complicated restraints have been imprinted upon the Constitution, rather than any attempt has been made to avoid them. An examination of the reserve powers and safeguards proposed and suggested to be placed at the disposal of the Governor, to be exercised and used in his discretion, points to what can hardly be regarded as palatable and encouraging to a people striving for political enfranchisement. And, if by the retention of these reserve powers and safeguards it is meant to hold India under perpetual tutelage, and never to allow her children to grow to political manhood, we cannot reprobate them too strongly. Such an intention should find its strongest disapproval from no less a person than the late Prime Minister of England, Mr. Stanley Baldwin who, on a significant occasion, not very long ago, with all the authority and weight of his position told his countrymen, "we have preached English institutions of democracy to India for a century. We taught her the lessons. She wants us to pay the bill to some extent. Changes due to the war left no part of the world intact. There is the view of nationalism and freedom running round the world and running as strongly in Asia as in any part. People talk of analogy between India and Ireland. I do not remember any serious rebellion in India, but remember she sent us men and money." These are words of wisdom and of rare political insight and breadth of vision, no less significant than those for which Macaulay has been immortalised as a prophet. But gentlemen, I do not despair that conventions may still grow out of and round these reserve powers which if used with firmness, judgment, discre-

tion and goodwill during the period of transition, and not beyond, until India has had an opportunity to rule her own destinies, on a joint and not a compartmental basis, they may prove to be the best safeguards against the encroachments of a spiteful and thoughtless majority on a helpless and hapless community rendered, by ingenious means, a statutory and permanent minority. Gentlemen, coming events cast their shadows before, and we are already beginning to have a foretaste of what you should look for when we have commenced our political life under the New Dispensation and started enjoying the unasked, unsolicited but magnanimous and delicious gift of Mr. Ramsay Macdonald. Would you believe, gentlemen, that in some quarters it is seriously proposed, I believe, and I am informed, with influential backing, to legislate for the confiscation of your lands, even your hearth and home under certain circumstances having reference not to trespass, Civil or Criminal, but to prayer and worship. It is a sample of what may be coming.

You will remember, gentlemen, that the scheme of the Report savours of no democratic principle. Democracy, under which it is just as possible for a sober well-organised minority to convert itself into a majority, as it is possible for a giddy reckless majority to be turned into a minority, has been given a wide berth. Under its scheme the majority, whatever its political outlook may be, is a perpetual majority and the minority, whatever its administrative outlook may be, is a perpetual minority, the situation never to be revised except at heavy risk and cost. Situated as

we are, sandwiched between a powerful majority community and a section of our own people, thanks to the so-called Poona Pact, to those of our men who manœuvred the presence there of some men arrogating to themselves the character of representatives from the province and last, if not the least, to the prophet and the dictator, I sometimes wonder if these reserve powers vested in the Governor, and judiciously exercised by him, are not our only source of protection, protection of a perpetual minority though playing a dominant part in the economic and intellectual life of the province. It is a very unorthodox view that I place before you but I submit that I yield to none in my desire to urge upon His Majesty's Government, that should Parliament decide to imprint those powers on the Statute Book to see that none but the ablest man in the public life of England is ever sent out as Governor of Bengal, where the problem of administration is of a most intricate and complicated nature. These powers are so varied in their character and so heavy in their proportions that I conceive none but a superman, of the type of Lord Ronaldshay (now Marquis of Zetland) and Sir John Anderson can honestly undertake to discharge them. Then, and then only the reserve powers shall have justified themselves. Gentlemen, I do not despair that our loyalty, our loyal services and our fitness for the conduct of political institutions of which England gives the world the most perfect model, will yet convince those who are not mere theorists but practical men of affairs, that the outline of the constitution chalked out in the Report requires to be considerably broadened to be approved

and cheerfully accepted by the Indian people. I agree with the Joint Committee over which the Earl of Selborne presided fourteen years ago, who said that the Governor should never "hesitate to point out to the Ministers what he thinks is the right course or to warn them, if he thinks they are taking the wrong course. But if, after hearing all the argument, Ministers should decide not to adopt his advice, then, in the opinion of the Committee, the Governor should ordinarily allow Ministers to have their own way, fixing the responsibility upon them, even if it may subsequently be necessary for him to veto any particular piece of legislation. It is not possible, but that in India, as in all other countries, mistakes will be made by Ministers, acting with the approval of a majority of the Legislative Council, but there is no way of learning except through experience, and by the realisation of responsibility." I want the framers of our constitution to realise nothing beyond this principle. And we assert with confidence that we are entitled to an opportunity for the realisation of this responsibility.

What is Responsible.

And gentlemen, if we are not being given that opportunity, I shrewdly suspect that the subversive and terrorist activities of a few misguided idealists in the country are no less responsible for it, than the diehards in England who are determined to worsen the situation. For our part, we condemn terrorism and are determined to help the Government to the best of our ability to root it out of the country altogether. I disclose no confidence when I tell you that the best minds of Bengal

are at work to devise methods whereby, nefarious activities could be effectively tackled, so as to restore this province to its original position as the leader of political thought in India. We will not allow the stigma of being the workshop of manslaughter to stick to our province. I have no doubt I have got the support of you all when I say, that we individually should do what lies in us to help to stamp out terrorist activities from the province of Bengal.

Federation.

Gentlemen, on no view of constitutional soundness can you imagine a politically autonomous province working smoothly without responsibility in the centre, which under the Report has been indefinitely put off because federation cannot be set up in the near future. I appreciate the difficulties by which the problem is surrounded, but the Federation conceived in the new constitution may well be speeded up, at any rate, with the units already in existence, so as to allow the autonomous provinces to work with full vigour, and us to justify that we deserve the trust imposed on us. But, gentlemen, the feature of the Report of the Select Committee which should gratify us is the installation of the Second Chamber, with such qualifications for its membership as should ensure it to function as an effective and efficient Second Chamber, to which I have no doubt that the landlords of Bengal shall find adequate representation by election or nomination, though, I cannot shut my eyes to the fact that as a replica of the lower Chamber it stands to defeat the very purpose for which it is created, namely, as a

House of Revision and Check. This 'replica of the lower Chamber' is another of those significant political theories upon which the White Paper and the Report thereon are based, which finds its support in no part of the world, civilised or uncivilised. And when I say adequate representation, I will not conceal from you the fact that, I have in my mind the under-representation of landowning interest against which we have always protested, hitherto, without any result. We have over and over again urged, and I am tempted to urge once more, that we form a community which is an asset on the side of the Government. We have never been found wanting to do justice to ourselves in any position of responsibility to which we have been invited, whether in the provincial arrangements or other spheres of activity. Gentlemen, it is on these grounds that I claim that we are entitled to larger representation whether in the legislature of the province or of the centre, commensurate with the interest which we represent as a body. We demand justice and nothing short of justice. But, gentlemen, we are gratified for another reason. It is that the practical utility of indirect elections has been recognised in the Report. No doubt *a priori* arguments may be marshalled against it, but having regard to the practical considerations, I am convinced that it is in consonance with the principle of Federation. We are therefore, at one with the Committee that after provincial councils have been constituted by direct choice of citizens of the province, it appears to us, as it did appear to the Statutory Commission and to the Joint Committee "to be quite unwarranted to assume that training in citizenship will

be impeded by the adoption of a device (*i.e.*, indirect election) for constituting the Central legislature which, having regard to the size of India, has such manifest advantages and avoids such obvious difficulties.”

Permanent Settlement.

Gentlemen, what gratifies us most is the security which has been given to the Permanent Settlement by the Report of the Joint Committee. But behind the silver lining there are clouds the bursting of which should have been left to the judgment of the autonomous provinces, rather than suggested or dictated with all the authority of the Joint Committee in their Report. They are the suggested tax on agricultural incomes, and the estate succession duty, in the Report called duty on succession to land. The objectionable features of these levies are self-evident, but this is not the occasion when I should go into a consideration of the wisdom or soundness of the uncalled for suggestions of the Committee on these heads. The advocates of tax on agricultural incomes argue on and from the hypothesis, that a large profit is intercepted by the landlords, that land revenue is a rent and therefore, there is no reason why agricultural incomes should be freed from taxation, and that, the burden of taxation borne by the agriculturists is not equal to that paid by non-agriculturists. All these propositions are either fallacious or unsound, and will not bear a moment's scrutiny in the light of historical facts and actual state of affairs.

Gentlemen, we are moreover, definitely of opinion that an amalgamated duty on succession to land, in

other words death duty, suggestions in respect of both of which we owe to the economic genius of Sir Walter Layton, will be unpopular and unjustifiable and would lead to serious complications.

Communal Award.

Gentlemen, the Joint Committee has done India a distinct disservice by adhering to the communal allocation, wrongly named 'award', with a view to giving it a solemnity which it does not deserve. It is not an award. It never was, as my esteemed friend Sir N. N. Sircar, now the legal member of the Governor-General's Executive Council, has proved beyond doubt and cavil. It was Mr. Ramsay Macdonald's gift to those who never wanted it. It is his contribution to high politics and higher statesmanship which suggests, and in fact establishes, the principle of protection, further protection for those who are protected by numbers, over-protected by weightage, and of sacrifice of those who are unprotected chiefly by lack of numbers and for want of weightage, the legitimate due of every class of minority, whose views as to their union with or separation from the majority ought, from every point of view, moral or political, to be supreme. Gentlemen, we fully appreciate and support the claim for reservation of seats for our Muslim brothers where they are in a minority. But I fail to realise the propriety and equity of a majority community such as our brothers are in Bengal, and in the Punjab, agitating for protection by reservation. Judged by any standard, reservation for a majority is indefensible in theory. This artificial restriction is, to say the least of it, a dead-

weight on the growth both of the majority and the minority. It stands to retard national progress. It should moreover have an injurious, nay prejudicial effect on the majority itself, for it makes it rely on legislative provision to keep up its position and not on its own inherent strength. Gentlemen, while I am on this point, I cannot resist the impulse of offering my most heartfelt gratitude to the Marquis of Zetland, than whom we hardly know of anyone in England, who has made a more thorough study of the Indian mind and customs, and of the psychology of the political situation and his eight colleagues, among whom are to be found the names of such eminent men in English politics as the Marquis of Salisbury and the Earl of Derby, and such outstanding personalities of Indian experience as Lord Hardinge, Lord Lytton and Sir Reginald Craddock, who offered him their best support. The rule established in opposition to the principle enunciated by the noble Marquis is without a parallel in the history of the world. And, gentlemen, if the Communal Award is bad, the so-called Poona Pact said to have been assented to by men whose authority to do so is open to very serious question, as neither representative nor authoritative, is worse.

The Report does not conceal the fact that the members of the Committee were inclined to deprecate it, yet they were inclined to perpetuate it to the doom and condemnation of the Hindu Community, with full knowledge of the circumstances under which it was achieved. That the Joint Committee had knowledge of these circumstances is evident from the Report, it is in a way admitted by them, and yet they choose to

adhere to it from what motive and with what object in view, I leave you to divine. And here, gentlemen, as I read the Report, I venture to think, lies the most significant blot of the production which agitated some of the best minds of India and of England for four years. Neither the Communal Award nor the ingenious Poona Pact leaves any room for the development of political or administrative ideals, far less for the growth of the minority as a part of the body politic. Condemned to a state of perpetual minority we can never make our influence felt in the conduct of the affairs of State. That to my mind, gentlemen, is the most unsatisfactory feature of the Report. We, in Bengal, have been unmercifully condemned to annihilation, unless better and soberer sense should prevail in our constitution-makers, and Parliament should decide to prescribe a revision of the Award and extinction of the Pact in the immediate future.

High Courts.

Gentlemen, I must confess that neither the proposal for provincialisation of the High Courts, particularly the Calcutta High Court, nor the introduction of service men as Chief Justices, appeals to me, and I feel that they cannot have your support either. The principle underlying the recommendation purports to give the sacred principle of separation of the Executive from the Judiciary accepted as a sound proposition on behalf of the Government of India by Sir Harvey Adamson, the Home Member in the Government of Lord Minto, and by Sir Henry Wheeler on behalf of the Government of Bengal, a complete and definite

go-by. Such a decision, I make bold to say, is fraught with grave results, in that, it may help to create suspicion in the Indian mind about the *bona fide* of British intentions and British admissions. It will be an unfortunate suspicion, but it is inevitable. The citadel of justice is threatened to be desecrated against which I am glad to find that our countrymen in Bombay, Patna and Madras are making a determined move to be followed, let us hope, by other provinces to urge upon His Majesty's Government to adopt the recommendations of the Simon Report in this particular. They are that no part of the Charters of the High Courts should be disturbed, and that all should be brought up to the level and status of the Calcutta High Court under the Government of India. It would have been a far more satisfactory arrangement if the Joint Committee had decided to achieve an uniformity of treatment under which all High Courts in India were centralised and their establishments placed upon the Central revenues. And here, we landlords, are in agreement with the Statutory Commission that "it involves no denial of the principles of Provincial Self-Government for, of course the High Court, whether in Calcutta or elsewhere, in carrying on its judicial work is entirely independent of the Executive and is outside the range of criticism by the Legislatures." We think that the Central and Provincial Governments may well delegate their administrative control over the respective High Courts to the Federal Court, thereby making the judiciary in India more independent of the Executive. That the Judiciary should be absolutely free from interference by the Executive is a valued principle,

and is advocated and admitted by sound political sense. Any lapse of it would be a slur on British rule in India, and its absence a danger. The proposal, may help, not unnaturally, to create a suspicion in our minds that it is the settled policy of His Majesty's Government to make the Judiciary the handmaid of the Executive. Nothing can be more unfortunate than that.

Mutual Trust.

Our administrative relations with England are of an indissoluble character, and it is for the mutual benefit of both that I urge upon you not to fail in your supreme duty to work the Reforms for all they are worth from which nothing but good will come, as I foresee it. Gentlemen, by tradition, as also by association, we Indians, I mean the general Indian public whole-heartedly desire the continuation of economic relations with England in preference to all other countries. But these relations, such as they are, must be mutually beneficial without the element of domination of one over the other. British trade in India which the Joint Committee have been over-eager to perpetuate should depend upon the goodwill and genuine support of the Indians. No amount of safeguard can help it indefinitely and perpetually. Anxious as we are to see amicable relations in economic sphere between the two countries placed upon a permanent footing, we feel that these brakes, in the Report called 'safeguards,' should be dropped altogether from the constitution, and that the Trade treaty which is being negotiated, should contain all that is for the mutual benefit of the two countries. British trade in India

can be preserved as the Earl of Derby in addressing a Lancashire audience observed, only by the goodwill of Indians and not by any statutory provisions and restrictions. Mr. Baldwin rightly said, "You cannot compel the people of India to buy British goods at the point of the bayonet." It is urgently necessary that all political parties in India should, for the moment, combine to make clear to the British public the fact, that the proposed constitution will not satisfy all shades of political opinion in the country, and to urge the adoption of such changes and amendments as would make India contented, at least for some reasonable time, with the transfer of power under the new constitution which I repeat again should be worked for all it is worth. For ourselves, it is equally necessary that we landlords, young and old, should combine, the various Landholders' Associations, whether in the Province, in the Division or in the District, in Bengal or in the sister province of Bihar, should combine and make a common cause against the ills with which we may be faced.

Gentlemen, you have a long and momentous programme to consider under the guidance of your own President. I shall now invite you to select him, who I am confident will do the fullest justice to the position to which we are agreed to call him. We, in Bengal are proud of the Maharajadhiraja Bahadur of Durbhanga as the distinguished President of the Bengal Landholders' Association, no less than they are in Bihar, who has nobly maintained the high traditions of the house of which he is the head.

**Presidential Address at the Annual General Meeting of the
British Indian Association.
March 31st, 1935.**

GENTLEMEN,

The year we have just left behind us has been an eventful one in more than one way. Some of these events have been noticed in the Annual Report before you. But before I draw your attention to the activities to which we, in this association, have devoted ourselves, and to the problems which have been canvassed in the country, I feel it my duty to express our deep sense of sorrow at the death of some prominent and valued members of this body, I mean Rai Bahadur Kumar Manmatha Nath Mitter, Sir Hari Ram Goenka, Babu Nafar Chandra Pal Chowdhuri, Babu Gopendra Mullick and Rai Bahadur Fanindra Nath Gupta, all scions of noble and ancient families. I must also on your behalf express our profound sorrow, which we share with our countrymen, at the death of those outstanding personalities whose loss has left the country poorer for it. They are Sir Bepin Behary Ghose, Sir Charu Chunder Ghose and Sir Abdulla Suhrawardy, all well-known to most of you. They are a personal loss to some of us and an irreparable loss to the country.

Activities of the Association.

Among the activities of the British Indian Association during the past year, the most important have been the All-Bengal Landholders' Conference, held in these rooms on the 23rd of December last, under the Presidency of the Hon'ble the Maharajadhiraj Bahadur of Darbhanga, the Indian Bar Councils' Amendment Bill, the Girls' Protection Bill, the Bengal Non-Agricultural Land Rent Settlement Bill, the Terrorist Conference, the Untouchability Abolition Bill, the Hindu Womens' Inheritance Bill, the constitution and affairs of the Economic Enquiry Board, the Temple Entry Bill, the remodelling of the Garnishee orders, the taxation proposals, and above all the constitutional reforms. In all these we have had the general support and co-operation of the Bengal Landholders' Association, and of the other Landholders' Associations in the province. Needless to say it is a healthy sign which should bear rich fruit. It will help us to consolidate our activities for the common benefit of the class.

Gentlemen, you need not be told that your unity has been the strength which enabled you to establish beyond cavil to the satisfaction of the British Government that their arrangement of the Permanent Settlement with the landholders of Bengal and Behar is founded upon honour and integrity on both sides, so as to require the personal approval of the august Sovereign himself, in the event of any disturbances of it. Gentlemen, let there be no party spirit among us; let there be no personal feeling among us. As a class we stand united and shall stand united, no matter what our personal risks may be.

The Landholders' Conference.

Gentlemen, as in the year before when we held the first All-Bengal Landholders' Conference under the distinguished presidency of our friend the Maharajadhiraj Bahadur of Burdwan to whom, on your behalf, I offer a cordial welcome back home, the last conference was an unqualified success. It was in this conference that the landholding community had an opportunity of exchanging their views and ventilating their grievances, such as existed, and of suggesting means of redress and remedy. The Conference, gentlemen, was a remarkable one, remarkable not simply because it was attended by almost every important Zemindar, or his representative, in the province of Bengal, and in the sister province of Bihar and Orissa, but also because of the presence of the Hon'ble Sir B. L. Mitter, the Revenue Member of the Government of Bengal on our invitation.

Gentlemen, the Hon'ble Revenue Member, though willing to do us justice, and to give the landholding community credit for its achievements in the past, could not persuade himself to recognise that we had maintained the public spirit or the sense of responsibility of our predecessors. Sir B. L. Mitter further reminded us that the permanent settlement was an arrangement entered into between the Government and the landlords more than a century ago when conditions were different. Since then lands have improved in value by reason of their higher yield because of improvements effected to them, and he said that it was unreasonable to expect that that arrangement should

stand in the way of the state sharing in the increased profits from land when such increase was attributable to expenditure by the state.

Gentlemen, without entering into the merits of the observations of the Honorable Revenue Member, I will take the liberty to remind him that whatever improvements have been made to the lands of Zemindars, have been done with the money and resources of the Zemindars themselves. I go further and say that, if there should be anybody entitled to the benefits of the improvements made to the estates, it is the Landlords and none else, for reasons perfectly well-known to you. We do not accept the major premiss of the Hon'ble Member's argument, and consequently we cannot accept his conclusion.

Gentlemen, but so far as the permanent settlement is concerned we feel reassured that it cannot be encroached upon, nor can its character be altered, except with the consent and approval of His Majesty the King Emperor, though we should have liked it to be provided that any legislation affecting the permanent settlement of Bengal should have had the previous consent of His Majesty the King before its introduction in the legislature, instead of such legislation being left merely subject to his assent. The safeguard suggested in the joint Parliamentary Committee's Report may prove illusory in practice.

The Hon'ble Sir B. L. Mitter did not stop there. He laid a very serious allegation at our door when he let fall an observation which suggested, that the future of the Zemindars was gloomy, and that they had lost

their position of influence by reason of having lost touch with their tenants.

Gentlemen, I consider this to be a very serious allegation against a community which has never been remiss in shouldering responsibilities for the welfare of the tenants quite as much as the Government itself. During these long years of economic depression, I have known of numerous Zemindars who have, in deserving cases, readily and cheerfully remitted their dues against their tenants so as to give them relief. The administration report itself of the Government is my authority for saying that rent suits have gone down, by more than 50 per cent., a fact which evinces sympathy with their tenants if anything, and this at a time when the Zemindar himself is more severely hit than almost anybody else. He has met the Government demands often from his own private resources, failing which it has been a painful sight to see the number of Zemindari^{es} put up to auction, kist after kist. The Zemindars, gentlemen, have tried their best to come to the aid of the Government on the one hand, and of the tenantry on the other, without any recognition from the Government whose opinion, I take it, was voiced at the Conference by the Hon'ble the Revenue Member. But if that is the opinion entertained by the Government of the Zemindars of Bengal, I am afraid, it is a very serious thing, and we should set about making a diligent search of our own hearts to find where the plague spot lies. It is needless to suggest that it would be to our best interest to remedy it, if any, and also to let the Government know that nothing would encourage the spread of communistic ideas more

effectively in the country than disparaging observations from persons in high authority of the Zemindars as a class. But this does not exonerate us from our responsibility to be of aid and assistance to the Government, and to do our duty to our tenants, and I will therefore ask you, Gentlemen, to do all that lies in your power to find out where the defect lies and rectify it so as to let the Government feel that observations such as were made by the Hon'ble Revenue Member were undeserved. And not unnaturally therefore, Gentlemen, is there a cry among some of us to know where to stand, with the Government or with the people. By the one we are utilised as we have hitherto been, by the others we are treated as dummies and our motives distrusted. My advice to you therefore, is to endeavour to avoid this dilemma, exercise your reason, exert yourself, and take your stand where you should be able to serve your interest which is no other than the interest of your people, best. It is by combination, combination between yourselves, and perhaps also with the people of the country. But after all said and done, Gentlemen, I have reason to think that we ought to be grateful to the Hon'ble Sir B. L. Mitter at whose instance, interest on arrears of land revenue has been reduced to 6 per cent. per annum in place of 8 per cent. per quarter. In this connection our thanks are also due to the Raja Bahadur of Nashipore for the part he played in procuring the concession.

Anti-Terrorist Conference.

Gentlemen, another Conference of equal importance which was held under the auspices of the British

Indian Association was the anti-terrorist Conference which was attended by representatives of all shades of opinion. The purpose of this Conference was not simply to condemn the subversive activities of terrorism but to devise ways and means and to mobilise public opinion, whereby these activities could be checked, so that, they may no more tarnish the fair reputation of Bengal for straight political propaganda on constitutional lines. Bengal believes in constitutional agitation, without which the highest political achievement of the century, the unsettling of the Partition of Bengal would never have been accomplished. The Committee of the Conference have often met to do some solid work which is still being continued. Their activities are not over yet, and, I expect, that with public sympathy and public co-operation they may be able to achieve what would redound to the credit of Bengal as a peace-loving province where political ideas have ever been guided by a sense of fairness, and politics controlled by reason, such as should give wide berth to terrorism or violence in any shape or form. To my mind, all credit for a change to a healthy frame of mind in favour of constitutional progress, and for having mobilised public opinion all over the province, may legitimately be claimed by the Conference and their Committee.

Problem of Unemployment.

Gentlemen, while I am on this topic I must not fail to draw your attention to the fact that the item in the programme of work, accepted by the anti-terrorist Conference, in which all shades of opinion and interests

were represented, as an important one in helping to check terrorism in Bengal has made little or no progress for lack of co-operation of large employers in Bengal. It is the problem of unemployment of Bengali youths and Bengali labour. They are undersold in Bengali market by non-Bengalis, while in non-Bengali markets the Bengali, however meritorious or skilled he may be, is tabooed. You do not open your morning paper without coming across an item of information conveying to you the news that the Bengali is banned in some province or other. If it is Behar to-day, it is U. P. to-morrow, and the Punjab the day after, and every other province figuring in between. Cases are not unknown where, in large Government concerns in Bengal, Bengalis have had to make room for non-Bengalis with the coming in of one such as head of the concern. If such a state of affairs is tolerated under the Government of the country, how much worse must it be under private employers, can better be imagined than described. Gentlemen, it is time now, that every Bengali, Hindu or Mahomedan, stood up as one man to protest against the influx of non-Bengalis into Bengal, to the prejudice, to the ruin, to the starvation of her own children. It is time now, that we insisted upon our Government to come to our rescue and help us to save ourselves as the governments in the sister provinces are doing. It is time now, that we also devised and adopted means of arresting the tide which sweeps the Bengali away, in his own home. I appeal to the sympathetic head of our administration, to kindly turn his attention to the calamitous condition of the Bengali in his own home where, as matters stand, he is per-

mitted to live on the sufferance of those who would not let him earn an honest living in theirs. If, for that purpose legislation is needed, by all means let us have it. We are prepared to support it, and I am confident that every Bengali is prepared to promote it. More than 50 per cent of Bengal's political ills will be cured. Will our Government seriously set about tackling the problem?

Rural Development.

The Bengal Rural Development Bill which is now before a Select Committee of the Bengal Legislative Council is a measure which is likely to affect our vital interests, yet it is a measure, which in my judgment demands the full support of the community to which we belong. The revival of the dying and the dead rivers of the province, and the restoration of the decadant areas to health and prosperity, are objects which are and ought to be dearest to the heart of everybody in Bengal, most of all to the heart of the Zemindar. But I submit, that a measure so important as this should have been circulated for public opinion, specially for the opinion of those whose interests are likely to be vitally affected. I, for my part, cannot realise why the Hon. Member-in-Charge of the Bill, should have fought shy of publicity of a measure so important as the rural development bill.

The principle of the bill as enunciated by His Excellency the Governor in his opening speech in the Bengal Legislative Council, is a perfectly sound and wholesome one, but I am inclined to ask the question whether the whole problem does not rest on the capacity

of the people to bear further burden, before their economic position is materially improved.

The deplorable condition of the peasants as a result of the unprecedented depression in their only money-crop is well-known, and unless the jute prices rise to an economic level, or their prices are fixed by legislation ensuring a certain margin of profit, I am afraid, it will be idle to expect that the ends of the Bill will be realised to the extent calculated by His Excellency and foreshadowed in the Bill. The peasants can ill-afford to take silt water at any cost, for they are too poor to afford that luxury in anticipation of larger yields which may or may not materialise. Theoretical results on paper have often turned out to be an unsafe foundation for increased taxation. I will remind you of a glaring instance. It is that of the Eden Canal. The prospect of their only valuable crop has been ruined, and there is no knowing what the result would be if the voluntary restriction scheme favoured by the Government fail. There is no hope in their hearts which will encourage them to purchase silt water for improvement of their agriculture, when the condition of their jute is in a hopeless mire. For a radical cure, I submit, we must look further afield to the general improvement of the rural economy which will add to the spending power of the masses, and to an enlargement of the scope for employment, and to an improvement in the financial condition of the Government itself, and of other public authorities of the province, so that, the services whose development is now suspended in consequence of lack of funds may function again and forge ahead. What strikes me as

the principal defect at the root of the idea of development is that for lack of educational facilities the scheme may not ensure success. You may flood the country with land mortgage banks, you may appoint and re-appoint marketing boards, you may cut and re-cut canals as you may revive dead rivers, but they, I am afraid, will be of no avail to the rural population of Bengal except when they are taught to take advantage of some or all of them. To subserve this purpose of the development of rural economy, an idea for which we are thankful to His Excellency Sir John Anderson, as the pioneer of the conception, in a country like India where not more than 6 to 7% of her people may be said to be literate, measures such as are proposed, far-reaching no doubt in their effect on national rehabilitation, may not be taken full advantage of, unless the people were educated up to a consciousness of their usefulness and of their benefits. I do not however, desire to disguise the fact that we landlords welcome the measure which seeks to strengthen our ryots financially, but I protest against the realisation of irrigation rates as public demands, for that would militate against the principle of rent "as first charge". This principle of the Bill, if accepted, will be tantamount to creating for the Government a position of super landlordism.

Rice Problem in Bengal.

Like the jute problem, I am afraid, gentlemen, rice is in a difficult predicament. The main features of the depressed condition of the rice industry are abnormal low prices prevailing in the country, and the

progressive diminution of export of rice to those countries which till recently were the most dependable customers of India. Whatever the causes may be, rice is faced with a situation which demands imperatively that an exhaustive survey of the many problems associated with it should be undertaken without delay, when all the relevant issues may be examined and weighed, so that, a correct estimate of the situation may be rendered possible, and an appropriate policy adopted in the interests of the trade as well as of the people themselves. Here also, I would suggest to the Government, as on a previous occasion I did suggest, in respect of jute prices, that the price of rice should be fixed by legislation, always keeping in view, of course, a reasonable margin of profit to the cultivator. Reduction in the rates of freight charged by Railway and Steamer companies for the carriage of rice, imposition of duties on import from outside, and provision of better marketing facilities will no doubt go a great way towards putting the rice trade in Bengal upon a proper and unassailable footing.

New Taxation Bills.

These, which have been introduced in the Bengal Legislative Council are a further raid upon the slender resources of the people of Bengal, especially the poorer section of them. Electricity is no longer a luxury. It is a necessity for domestic and for industrial purposes alike. The proposed tax on the consumption of electric power strikes, in my judgment, at the very root of both domestic convenience and cleanliness and industrial development. In this age of advanced in-

dustrialism, when all over the civilised world, they are devising means to produce economically their manufactures with the aid of cheap electric power, we, in India, are devising means of laying further handicap upon our manufacturing concerns. One of the cheapest commodities in India is our coal, with the aid of which electric energy can be generated in the remotest countryside with the greatest economy, resulting in the harnessing of the same for industrial purposes, both in cottage and larger industries, of which India stands most in need, in order to improve her economic condition as against foreign manufactures which continue to sit like a nightmare on the fragile breast of our infant industries. Towards the solution of a problem so difficult as this, electricity is the only medium which may be utilised for modernising our manufacturing processes in almost every sphere of our industrial development. Gentlemen, from this point of view one cannot help considering the tax to be an unwelcome measure, quite as much as the tobacco tax which will be keenly felt by 90 per cent of Bengal's population, by every agriculturist, and every labourer, to whom it is not a luxury, but a necessity, next only to their food and raiment. Not less objectionable are the higher stamp duties proposed to be levied on contracts of various kinds, and the formation of joint stock concerns which are a necessary factor in the industrial development of India. A yet more unsavoury proposal is the Amusement tax, which is likely to result in a complete denial to the poor labourer, who, in search of relaxation justly needed for the maintenance of his physical efficiency, repairs to a cinema or to a theatre. Be it remembered,

Gentlemen, that these taxes are taken recourse to replenish your budgetary deficit, to balance your budget left depleted by restoration of cuts, at a time when, upon the admission of the Government, our finances are in anything but a sound and satisfactory condition.

Landlords and Tenants.

Gentlemen, there is no doubt about the wisdom, nay, the necessity of landlords and tenants combining with each other. Both have vested interests which should not be permitted to be exploited by agitators. It would be on our part, a wise policy to identify ourselves with our tenants to resist the tide of communism which is slowly but surely spreading in the country. All interests connected with lands should be united into one whole. I would like to see the Agricultural party to stand firm for the preservation of the interests of land, just as much as I should like to see the landlords to come out in the open, and identify themselves with their tenants. They can no longer afford to remain mere observers of events. If they cannot do this, they must either retire or be retired. It is for us to explore the causes of our tenants' grievances, if any, and find the remedy.

Insolvency of Landlords and Tenants.

Gentlemen, we have so often drawn the attention of the Government to the desperate condition to which both the landlords and their tenants have been reduced, that I make no apology for reverting to the problem once again, before I lay down my charge to which you installed me three years ago. Gentlemen, since I took

the liberty of calling the attention of the Government to the deplorable state of affairs, I am glad to notice that there has been a feeling of sympathy in the Government, who have come forward to make an experiment for the help of cultivators in certain parts of the province. And now that the Government have initiated the institution of land mortgage banks for the benefit of tenants, I would appeal to the Government on your behalf to extend their scope and usefulness to every part of the province, so as not to deprive the landlords hit hard by economic depression, and for no fault of their own, of their beneficent advantages, unless it is the object of the State to see them go down and perish and disappear. By reason of jute being placed in a bad situation, the purchasing power of the cultivators has appreciably diminished, with the result that its repercussion has materially affected the landlords also. It is imperative therefore, that credit organisations should be developed for the benefit of both.

And, apart from these credit organisations what will be to the best interests of the landlords is, as I have suggested on a previous occasion, the establishment of Revenue Courts with power to bring revenue cases to a speedy trial and take speedy action toward their termination. These purposes gentlemen, can never be served by the ordinary Civil Courts whose assistance we are accustomed to seeking. Certificate Procedure, no doubt, is a remedy, but it is an expensive procedure the benefits of which most landlords must perforce deny themselves by reason thereof. I am not prepared to accept the general plea of inability on the part of the tenant to pay when I am reminded of

the heavy per centage of collections in Khas Mahal areas, compared to which our collections are insignificant. They are the same tenants cultivating similar fields and growing similar crops. It is not therefore, a question of general inability to pay, but unwillingness to pay at the instance and on the encouragement of parties, to whose unwelcome activities, the attention of the government should be drawn as tending to and paving the ground for communism in Bengal.

The Administration.

Gentlemen, we cannot express our gratitude to His Excellency the Governor of Bengal too adequately, for the genuine attempts towards the betterment of the conditions of the people of the country which his Government have taken upon themselves to inaugurate. While we should press for the materialisation of His Excellency's ideas of economic recovery and rural development, we, on our part, should not slacken our efforts to carry on an honest propaganda in calculating the respective rights of landlords and tenants which should be scrupulously observed and conserved; what are the rights they should respectively try to protect, as well as what are the responsibilities each should shoulder. And if, for this purpose, informed literature should be broadcast, in my opinion the idea ought to be vigorously pursued.

Their Majesties' Silver Jubilee.

Jubilees of Royal personages always afford happy occasions for the expressions of gratitude on one side and goodwill and sympathy on the other. They provide, as they provided in ancient times, excellent

opportunities for reciprocating goodwill and love on both sides, namely, the ruler and the ruled. The forthcoming Silver Jubilee upon which we beg to offer our most sincere and respectful congratulations to their Majesties, to be celebrated in May next, is naturally, therefore, eagerly looked for, not only because India, perhaps, harassed as it is by depression and constitutional uncertainties, may expect relief in some way or other, but also because the goodwill and sympathy of His Majesty's government, so often proclaimed may, perchance, be even fractionally shown to satisfy the aspirations of Indians for constitutional progress and material advancement. What is in my mind is, that the Indian government may utilise this occasion to the best and the noblest purpose by remission of taxes that lie heavy on the masses, and by slackening the rigours of many other measures which affect the people whose lasting gratitude shall not be an inadequate reward. Jubilee celebrations usually involve huge expenditures, and they will be most welcome if, as desired by their Majesties, unnecessary expenditures are avoided and larger expenditures are undertaken by the Government for the alleviation of the woes of the people by taking up constructive works of public benefit.

Gentlemen, in this connection I would like to remind the Government of the case of the detenues, hundreds of whom are interned without proper trial, and are wasting themselves without being given any opportunity of proving themselves useful to the Society and the State. I have no doubt that many of them are guilty and perhaps many of them are innocent also. The case of these latter requires fuller considera-

tion both for the sake of humanity and as a matter of principle. I submit, they deserve to be given a chance to prove themselves responsible citizens of the State. Goodwill begets sympathy as much as sympathy begets goodwill, and if, they receive goodwill and sympathy they will not fail to reciprocate them and put forth honest endeavours to prove to be valuable members of society. That is human nature. If on the happy occasion of their Majesties' Silver Jubilee, mercy and clemency is shown to those who deserve it, I have no doubt the atmosphere will be much clearer, and millions of their Majesties' Indian subjects will join in the celebrations with a full and joyous heart, and pray for their Majesties' long and prosperous reign. And, I need hardly assure their Majesties that the prayer which shall go forth from the landlords of Bengal will be as ardent and devoted as it has ever been earnest.

Gentlemen, I will now ask you to elect your Committee and your office-bearers for the ensuing year. In doing so however, I cannot let this opportunity pass without expressing with thankfulness my appreciation of the willing assistance and wise counsel ungrudgingly offered to me by your Committee, and of the loyal co-operation of your Secretaries who are retiring with me, one of them, to our regret, does not propose to come back by reason of his health. We all wish Kumar Surendra Nath Law a speedy return to perfect health. I shall be failing in my duty if I do not express a word of appreciation for the anxious and loyal services rendered to the Association by your Assistant Secretary, Mr. Sachin Sen, during my term of office, both as your Secretary and your President.

Prize Distribution of the Beltala Girls' High School.

January 11, 1931.

On the occasion of the prize distribution of the Beltala Girls' High School Mr. P. N. Tagore, Sheriff of Calcutta delivered the following speech, Mrs. K. C. De distributing the prizes.

FRIENDS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

It has given me great pleasure to be with you this evening on the occasion of the 11th. Annual Prize Distribution of the Beltala Girls' High School which has existed ever since 1920, and has been doing good work. I understand that the school was started under the auspices of Lady Bose whom we all respect, and for whose devoted services to the Nari Siksha Samity we all have unbounded admiration. It appears, ladies and gentlemen, from the report of the working of the school during session 1930 which has been placed before you by Mr. Peary Mohan Chatterjee, the indefatigable Secretary of the institution, that making a very modest and humble beginning, the school has today attained the status of a full grown institution affiliated to the University of Calcutta. And here gentlemen, I must congratulate the managing committee and the promoters of the institution upon the fact that they have got for their friend, philosopher and guide no less a person than my esteemed friend

the Hon'ble Mr. Bepin Behary Ghose whom we all respect, nay, more, for we love him.

ORIENT AND OCCIDENT.

Ladies and gentlemen, one of the greatest drawbacks, as I conceive it, in the education of our girls is that there is too much of occidentalization in some of the sister schools in the City in the upbringing of their girl students. I for one, ladies and gentlemen, have great misgivings about the kind of education that is imparted in them to our girls. The object of women's education ought never to be to de-womanize them, but to make them essentially Indian women, worthy of the great traditions of Indian womanhood, exemplified by the lives of their mothers, grandmothers, and even great grandmothers. Ladies and gentlemen, the ideal which I place before myself in regard to the education of our girls is, that we must train them up so as to make them good daughters, good sisters, good wives, good mothers and above all good house-wives, so that their noble example of goodness in every aspect of our domestic and social life may be an example to their children, whom you expect to be ideal citizens and ideal leaders of men and society. Ladies and gentlemen, it is said that children, particularly boys, generally take to their mothers and rest assured, if your mothers are good and great, their goodness and greatness shall be reflected upon their daughters, and if in their turn they have followed the footsteps of their mothers the future generations of India shall be noble and distinguished. It is from that point of view that I insist that the education of our girls should be so

fashioned as to make them ideal mothers, ideal sisters, ideal wives and ideal daughters. I rejoice gentlemen, to notice that the management of the Beltala Girls' High School of which my friend the Hon'ble Mr. Bepin Behary Ghose is the President, has been careful in prescribing a course of training for their girls which is in perfect agreement and harmony with my ideas, such as I have described them a minute ago. It is an ideal which I have sedulously endeavoured to realise in my own home and I will tell you that I have never regretted it. I should like however, to impress upon the management of the school not to allow anything to stand between their ideal and the actual practice that should obtain in the school, now and hereafter. By all means educate our girls well and as high as you like, but only to dispel the cloud and the mist that may be covering their minds. Help their mental growth and development to attain to a state of culture and intellectual activity, but do not help their mind to grow to a devotion to frivolity, fashions and what may be called "furious modernism", or acquire a habit of that mental outlook which should bid fair to run riot with all sense of delicacy,—I will not say decency.

Education on National lines.

To the teaching staff of the school our best thanks are due for the splendid devotion they have displayed to the education of the little girls in the institution. Their minds should never be diverted from the main objective of the school, namely, "to impart education on national lines such as befitted Bengalee girls of the middle class *bhadrolok* community, to train

them to be ideal housewives, loyal to their national institutions and social traditions." If the teaching staff of the school have succeeded in realizing this noble and ambitious project, I say, ladies and gentlemen, they will have earned the eternal gratitude of generations yet unborn.

It is a pleasure to find that the institution has a residence of its own, and for this our thanks are due both to the Government and to the Corporation of Calcutta, no less than to the gentlemen who have been untiring in their efforts to collect funds for the purpose. Further expansion is urgently called for and, but for the fact that times are hard, I should not imagine you would have much difficulty in realising your project. I have no doubt however, that an improvement in the situation will be attended with better prospects, happier outlook and more ready co-operation for the benefit of the school.

Word of Encouragement.

I shall now say a word of appreciation to those little girls who have taken so prominent a part in the programme of the evening. I have been charmed, and I am confident, that I am voicing your opinion also,—we have been charmed by the music, the hymns, and the recitations with which we have been treated. I really do not know whom specially to mention in this connection. They have all been so excellent in the performance of the task they had undertaken, each one quite as good as the other.

Ladies and gentlemen, I have been delighted to have had this opportunity of spending the evening with

these pretty little girls whose achievements in the winning of prizes and medals are as much a source of pride to them as it is a source of pleasure to us, to have taken part in this happy function, made happier by the presence of the lady, Mrs. K. C. De, who symbolises in her the ideal I have ventured to preach to you,—a happy blending of culture and all that is held noble in Indian womanhood.

Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you heartily for having called me to this Chair and given me the opportunity to appreciate the magnificent services which the managing committee of the Beltala Girls' High School are rendering to the country,—to the womanhood of India.

Meeting of the Sanskrit Sahitya Parishat.
June 2, 1931

GENTLEMEN,

We meet under a heavy cloud—it is the cloud which has overcast our national culture and our national glory,—in fact the whole of Eastern culture and Eastern glory. It is under this cloud that the Hindu and the Mussalman stand aghast, side by side, at the unholy attempt that is being made to give a rude shock to the glory of their respective forefathers, the glory for which the East is, and will always remain, essentially East, uninfluenced by the West, the glory for which the East is still entitled to hold its head aloft, notwithstanding the impact of the west.

Changes in the curriculum.

The proposed changes in the curriculum of the Matriculation Examination in our University are of a far reaching character, and deserve the most careful consideration by the University, and still more carefully should the changes be considered by the people of the country whose traditions and culture are threatened by the proposed changes to be destroyed, and for whose benefit the University exists, and must always exist. The changes are suggested under the pretext that the study of the Vernaculars should be promoted in the place of Oriental Classical Languages.

The promotion of the study of the Vernaculars is no doubt a sound policy, but I have no hesitation to say, that it is an unwise policy when sought to be enforced at the cost of the classical culture of the country. I have no doubt gentlemen, that you, at least most of you, followed the discussions on the subject before the University Committees. You cannot have failed to notice that they are not unanimous on the point and, I am glad to note, that the dissentients who already formed a considerable number, are daily being added to with all the weight, influence and wisdom that their name, erudition and public work entitle them to. To relegate the classical languages,—with your permission gentlemen, I will use a more appropriate term,—to condemn the classical languages to the back ground in the school leaving stage, and leave them to take their chance in a lottery of a dozen or more optional subjects is a measure fraught with evil, when you have taken into your serious consideration the points which I shall take the liberty of briefly placing before you, one by one :—(1) A grounding in the classics, not necessarily of an elaborate character, is essential to all sound education, whether the student pursues later on a literary or a scientific course. The importance of a classical training is recognised by the Report of the Matriculation Examination Reorganisation Committee which recommends that, “no one will be allowed to obtain a degree in Arts unless he has at some stage passed a University Examination in a Classical Language.” The Report does not state the standard of the University Examination to be passed at some stage, and in the absence of any definite statement it

may safely be assumed that the standard elected by a candidate will be the lowest viz., the Matriculation standard. And if that be so, it would be as well to have a compulsory paper in a Classical language at the Matriculation stage.

(2) The Vernaculars are developing on the soil of their connected Classical Languages supplemented by the inspiration drawn from Western culture. They have not yet reached that degree of development, and are not likely to reach it for many years to come, which would enable them to dispense with any further dependence on the Classical Languages. To replace them by the Vernaculars at the present stage of their development would not only effectively arrest the growth of the Vernaculars themselves, but prove fatal to the study of the Classical Languages, a systematic cultivation of, at any rate, the rudiments and fundamental principles of which is essential for the growth of a healthy, vigorous and national mind.

(3) The present policy of having a compulsory paper in a Classical Language at the Matriculation or School leaving stage offers a field of employment to a very large number of Pandits and Maulavis who are employed as teachers of Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian in all High English Schools. The proposed changes will so far restrict the scope of their employment as practically to lead to the eventual extinction of this type of scholars who have hitherto kept alive, inspite of much discouragement, the study of the Classical Languages in our country.

(4) A sound system of training for Indian youths should be based upon the treasures of Oriental Culture

as preserved in the Classical Languages of India. Many illustrious thinkers and educationists, including Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Rabindranath Tagore hold this view. I shall place the Mahatma's opinion before you. He says, "In fact I deeply regret that I could not acquire more Sanskrit, as much of it as I learnt later. No Hindu boy or girl should be without a sound knowledge of Sanskrit. I now think that in all Indian curricula of higher education there should be a place for Hindi, Sanskrit, Persian, Arabic and English besides of course, the Vernacular. This big list need not frighten any one. A scientific knowledge of one language makes a knowledge of other languages very easy," and to Rabindranath we turn for a testimony the value of which is incalculable in that he, more than any man alive in India, represents the vernacular culture of India in a measure unattained and unattainable by any body. Dr. Tagore says that "those who have to study Bengali must know Sanskrit for the sake of its thorough understanding and also for mastering its best instrument of expression. It will be disastrous if students whose mother tongue is Bengali are allowed to neglect Sanskrit."

Study of Science is ever more important for our people if they do not wish to lag behind in the race of life and stagnate in a perpetual dust of obscurity.

Sanskrit should be made Compulsory.

I strongly recommend therefore that both these subjects, Sanskrit and Elementary Science, be made compulsory in the Matriculation Examination Syllabus

offering an opportunity for our students to **keep up** through the former a living link with their cultural wealth and through the latter a harmony with the spirit of the modern age." On the scholastic side we are deeply impressed by what Professor C. R. Lanman, the greatest living *savant* among American orientalists says, that "Of all the Indo-European languages Sanskrit is incomparably well-adapted as an elementary study for the purposes of mental discipline in general and of rigorous linguistic training in particular. The transparency of its structure is absolutely unique. The various elements—prefix, root, derivative suffix, inflexional ending—which in synthesis constitute the word, are easily made the subject of quick and certain analysis by the veriest beginner. The habit and power of alert observation and of linguistic reflection are best won by the study of some foreign language. One single year of Sanskrit may, with proper books, be made so fruitful that any intending Anglicist, Hellenist or Latinist may well hesitate to forego the unmatched opportunity which it offers for winning a habit and a power that shall enable him to use his English or his Greek or his Latin vigorously and effectively." Mr. E. F. Oaten, lately our Director of Public Instruction, also has expressed the opinion that "Indian Renaissance must be based, in a considerable measure upon India's ancient history and literature." Even in the case of a pure scientist, a knowledge of a Classical Language conduces to clear thinking and expression. To make the study of a Classical Language optional at the Matriculation stage amounts to a premature bifurcation and specialisation,—before the mental

faculty of the student has begun to develop, so as to enable him to find out for himself what it is he has an aptitude for.

(5) Although the Classical Languages have been put in the list of a large number of optional subjects, it would appear that the option is not likely to be, and perhaps surely will not be exercised in favour of these Languages, as some of the alternative subjects are admittedly much easier, tempting the candidates to offer one or the other, the latter in preference to the former. Whoever has heard of human nature taking recourse to what are not "short cuts."

(6) The moral and religious life of an Indian is most intimately connected with the wisdom of their forefathers as enshrined in the classical texts, and no policy of education can be wiser than that which encourages acquaintance with the original, rather than through translations which hardly ever preserve the spirit of the original.

(7) It may be argued that a classical language will be of no use in the college course for a student of Science. That argument has been worn threadbare by qualified men and combated effectively by a scientist so eminent as Sir Praphulla Chandra Ray. It may similarly be argued that Algebra is a useless study for an Arts student, as it has no bearing on our daily life. If some boys find a Classical Language distasteful, there are others who abhor Mathematics. Will any educationist therefore, make Mathematics optional to accommodate such students? The average, normal student who will develop into the normal cultured man should be taken into consideration in framing a curri-

culum ; and for the normal cultured man some acquaintance with literature, ancient and modern, in an ancient language and in modern languages, is equally necessary along with some knowledge of Mathematics and the Sciences. On what principle, one fails to understand, can Algebra or Geometry be insisted upon in the higher school stage, to the entire neglect of Sanskrit, or Persian, or Arabic, in a country like India where they form the bases of our Hindu and Moslem cultures, and have a far greater bearing on our life and dominating influence over our thought than, say, Algebra has?

(8) The unpopular character of the proposed changes has evoked a strong and widespread agitation on the platform and in the press. And rest assured gentlemen, the agitation is sure to grow in volume, and eventually become irresistible when the denationalising character of the move is recognised.

Excellence of the Sanskrit Language.

Gentlemen, so far as I am concerned I can speak of the language of my fore-fathers, but I feel that what as a Brahmin I say of the Sanskrit Language, apply with equal force to Arabic and Persian, the latter, the sweet language of Hafez and Omar with whom every one of you, Hindu or Mahomedan is familiar. Nearly a century ago when Professor Bopp first published his Comparative Grammar of Sanskrit, Zend, Greek, Latin and Gothic, all hands in Europe were against him. So much so, that the so-called Philosopher Dugald Stewart, as the representative of the then European culture, asserted with emphasis that the

whole of the Sanskrit language, and the whole of the Sanskrit literature, mind, a literature extending over 3000 years, and larger in magnitude than the ancient literatures of Greece and Rome put together was a forgery of those wily priests, the Brahmins. Those days however, are gone past and we are in the midst of the period when, thanks to the intellectual, moral, speculative and theological greatness and excellence of our Swami Vivekananda and Dr. Rabindra Nath Tagore, there is not a solitary cultured mind whether in the East or in the West, which does not aspire to drink in the well of that most wonderful language the Sanskrit, and exchange ideas with the fellow workers in the construction of the fundamental concepts of humanity, with the fathers of the most natural of natural religions, with the makers of the most transparent of mythologies, with the expositors of the most certain philosophy and the givers of the most elaborate laws. It is not a language which can be relegated to oblivion.

Gentlemen, I am not a great Sanskritist, and I do not pretend to be one, but I feel a legitimate pride in thinking that in my family, as in many other notable families in Calcutta and in the province,—we make Sanskrit, the language of our forefathers, the basis of our children's education, and, let me assure you, that we have never regretted it. I might even put it as high as that modern European classical scholarship, scholarship in Latin and Greek not infrequently has drawn its inspiration from Sanskrit literature. "As soon, however, as Sanskrit stepped into the midst of these languages," says Prof. Max

Müller, "there came light and warmth and mutual recognition. They all ceased to be strangers, and each fell of its own accord into its right place. Sanskrit was the eldest sister of them all, and could tell of many things which the other members of the family had quite forgotten." In the opinion of the highest authorities Sanskrit has imparted to the whole history of man a reality which it never possessed before.

Essentially a living language.

It has often been urged gentlemen, that Sanskrit is a dead language. It is dead, but behind its death it has left a vitality from which all the living language of India, whether Aryan or Dravidian, draw their life and soul, in fact their highest inspiration. Those of you gentlemen, who are familiar with the extraordinary development of the Bengali language, so as to entitle it to take its place by the side of world languages, or the development of Marathi, Guzrati, the Hindi, and the South Indian languages such as Tamil and Telegu, will bear me out that even a limited knowledge of Sanskrit greatly facilitates the acquisition of knowledge of the Vernaculars of India. This is a point which has been urged so often with irreproachable arguments by men better qualified than myself to speak on the subject, that I will not repeat them here, but I will take the liberty of reminding you of a very appropriate argument which the greatest oriental Savant of the last century placed before us, namely, that between one who knows Sanskrit and Hindi or Bengali and another, who knows Hindi or Bengali only there is about the same difference in their power of forming an intelligent

appreciation of India, its inhabitants, its philosophy, its religion, its culture, its traditions and above all its genius, as there is between a traveller who visits Italy with a knowledge of Latin, and the party personally conducted to Rome and Venice and Verona by Messrs. Thomas Cook and Sons, the tourists' agents. Behind its death Sanskrit has left a literature which upon the bibliographical computation of the Government of India, made half a century ago, in the early eighties, numbered over ten thousand manuscripts. I have not the latest figure available before me, but even as it is, as I have said already it is more than the whole classical literature of Greece and Italy put together. To the historian of the human race, to the student of the development of the human mind, these manuscripts I venture to say, are true representatives of India from age to age. The true history of the world must always be gathered from a few leading lights of the literature of the country, and as we measure the Himalayas by the height of the Mount Everest, our measure of India must be judged by the poets of the Vedas, the speculative thinkers of the Upanishads, the philosophers of the Vedanta and the argumentators of the Sankhya System. It is therefore, that Sir William Jones in England, and Hœrder and Goethe in Germany, spoke of the Sanskrit language in terms of highest admiration. Gentlemen, if they did not represent the culture and the best minds of their respective countries, I do not know who did. Writing in the Asiatic Journal a century ago, Professor Horace Hayman Wilson said that "every one acquainted with the spoken speech of India knows

perfectly well that its elevation to the dignity and usefulness of a written speech has depended, and must still depend upon its borrowing, largely from its parents or kindred source ; that no man who is ignorant of Sanskrit can write Hindustani or Bengali with elegance, or purity, or precision, and that the condemnation of Classical Languages to oblivion would consign the dialects to utter helplessness and irretrievable barbarism." Gentlemen, if that held good in 1836 I say that it holds good with greater force today. The language of the original Upanishads which must ever occupy a prominent place in the sacred literature of the Indo-Aryans cannot be obliterated from the face of the earth. The philosophical speculations which the language contains are sublime productions of the human mind. They are the most ancient monuments of philosophical conceptions and, as such, they are far more advanced both in the depth and the loftiness of their ideas and opinion than any of the great schools, whether, anterior or posterior to Socrates. These speculative thinkers of the East contributed through the medium of Sanskrit largely to the formation of the civil and domestic polity and directed the whole tone of moral ordinances. They are considered with abundant reasons as the highest authorities on which the various systems of philosophy are said to rest. Gentlemen, it would be an act of vandalism to be a party to the obliteration of the Sanskrit language, or of the classical languages of India. I go further and say that any suggestion even, of the obliteration of the classical languages of India, Persian, Arabic and Sanskrit deserves our highest condemnation. The

proposed changes are enough to make Schopenhaur the greatest of early German philosophers, who in one solitary Sanskrit book found the solace of his life and also the solace of his death, and scholars and *savants* like Goldstucker, and Whitney, and Max Müller, and Cowell, turn in their graves. It is a proposal whose effect upon the growth of nationalism in India may be discouraging for, it is only in the mirror of the past that you see your future.

**Address delivered before the Taltola Public Library.
July 1, 1931.**

Utility of a Library.

GENTLEMEN,

I appreciate the high honour you have done me by inviting me to perform what I consider a very pleasant function, and I assure you, that in accepting your invitation, I had to disappoint many other friends who expected that I should be with them in the discharge of presidential function in connection with activities of another nature. But none of them was half as interesting as the one to which I have been called by your generosity this afternoon. Rest assured gentlemen, that none of them appealed to me as much as the function that we are performing now. The Taltola Public Library is an institution which has nearly half a century's history behind it, and I am told, that its commencement was very very humble. I will assure you that that is one of the reasons why my admiration for what you have been able to achieve during these years, is so considerable. You have grown to be an institution of importance and public benefit to the people of the locality.

Dr. Durga Churn and Surendranath—national assets.

Gentlemen, when I think of Taltola, I am naturally reminded of the great personality who lived and died in this quarter and made Taltola

famous in the history of Calcutta. That was a genius who made the medical profession honoured, respected and implicitly relied upon throughout the province and perhaps outside it. The name of Durga Charan is to this day a name to conjure with in our society, no matter how strongly armed with brilliant degrees and other qualifications professional men of today may be. That is not all gentlemen, for, when again I think of Taltola in later days I am filled with wonder and admiration that how was it possible for one particular quarter of Calcutta to have produced one after another geniuses of gigantic proportions. Surendranath remains for all times alive in the annals of India, as a nation-builder and a patriot, whose unselfish devotion to his motherland will ever illumine the pages of history. Personally gentlemen, I feel that if we are politically advanced in any sense, and if we expect to make further advancement in the near future, that is due to Surendranath, the Surendranath, who laid the foundation of nationalism in the seventies of the last century, the Surendranath from every fibre of whose being a ray and spark went forth throughout the country to generate and broadcast nationalism in India.

Gentlemen, I congratulate you upon being the residents of a locality which produced these mighty figures, father and son in the history of our country. If their names remain as a permanent national asset, I have no doubt that the name of Taltola will remain green in the memory of generations yet unborn. That such a locality should possess a Public Library such as the Taltola Public Library, is only in the fitness of things and going through some of your annual reports,

I rejoice to find that your progress throughout these 48 years has been slow but steady. The institution is giving opportunities to those, who take an interest in the maintenance of an institution of this nature, to cultivate virtues of self-help, of organisation and of proper management of an institution of the size, importance and utility of the Taltola Public Library as a stepping stone to the management of larger institutions. And as I see it, gentlemen, I cannot think that you will look to larger institutions elsewhere, for the energy and devotion with which I am informed you manage this institution. I feel sure that in course of time it will develop into one of the most popular and most important public institutions in the Metropolitan City of Calcutta.

Gentlemen, if you will permit me the liberty I cannot render you better service than to advise you to be always true to the noble ideals of the founders of this institution. It should always be your ambition to take a leaf out of the books of those founders of the institution who were actuated by no other motive than to do good to their community and the people of the locality. Their devotion, self-sacrifice and spirit of harmony in the promotion of the library ought to be your guiding mottoes. You can not do better justice to yourselves nor to those for whom you exist.

Capt. J. N. Bannerjee.

Gentlemen, what pleases me most is to find that you are under the very able guidance of a gentleman for whom I, and, indeed the whole country, has got the highest respect, I mean my friend Capt. J. N.

Banerjee. You will agree with me that if the elder brother was the champion of the political uplift of the country the younger has been untiring in his efforts to set up the ideal of the physical uplift of the country. He believes in *mens sana in corpore sano*. A man of mature judgment and genuine sympathy he is an asset in any institution to which he belongs just as the expert knowledge of the keeping, preservation and cataloguing of books of my friend and relation Babu Norendra Nath Ganguli, who has rendered whole-hearted service to the cause and well-being of this library, is invaluable to institutions of this character.

Gentlemen, I feel that the Taltola Public Library has a great future before it, and I hope that you will spare no pains to utilise the opportunities you have in setting up an ideal institution in the country and doing good to the people of the locality, I wish you gentlemen, God-speed.

Prize distribution of the Sarada Charan Aryan Institution.

Tuesday, the 13th October, 1932.

GENTLEMEN,

I have been requested to give away the prizes this afternoon, and I have very great pleasure in doing so, particularly as I have watched the records achieved by the successful students with interest, and feel that they thoroughly deserve them.

The Sarada Charan Institution has created a record for itself. Making a humble beginning nearly half a century ago under conditions which were neither favourable nor encouraging, the institution soon made its existence felt through the indefatigable exertion and devotion of one man, one, of whom we Bengalees are proud. Babu Sarada Charan Mitter was no ordinary man. Apart from the foundation of this institution, whether as a scholar or as a lawyer he had few equals in his time. As a Judge of the High Court he has left a record which might well be coveted by those coming on the bench after him. There was no sphere of activity in the social or intellectual life of our community in which Babu Sarada Charan was not deeply interested, nay, did not take a leading part, and to the betterment of which he did not contribute a large and substantial share. And of this I cannot give you a better example than the Sarada Charan Institution which testifies to the original idea of its great

founder. The institution is his own memorial, where alas, his country has failed to raise one and do more. I venture to say gentlemen, that the ideas of the founder, if and when carried to fruition would leave none in our country undisciplined or irreligious, immoral or illiterate. The instruction that is imparted here is on national lines and through the medium of the vernacular, of which Babu Sarada Charan Mitter himself was an ardent devotee. And it is gratifying to note that his worthy son, my friend Babu Sarat Kumar Mitter is doing his best to realise the ideals of his father. The mantle of a great man has fallen on worthy shoulders.

It is gratifying also to note gentlemen, that through days, fair and foul, the authorities of the School have been able to maintain the noble ideals and principles of its great founder to whose liberality and the self sacrifice of members of its staff the institution owes its outstanding position among educational institutions of this great city.

But gentlemen, the time has long since gone by when people, and specially parents, thought that no other lessons were to be learnt in school than the lessons of the class room and nowadays we recognise that, besides improving a boy's physical development and health, the playing fields teach him many things which he cannot obtain from books alone. Games teach you how to "keep a stiff upper lip" when you are beaten, not to become "swollen headed" when you are successful, and above all to keep on trying, whether at work or at play. For our whole life is a race—a struggle in which the weakest shall fall behind. There is so much competition nowadays in everything, that

unless a man is prepared to put every ounce of his energy into his work he cannot hope to reach the top of the ladder of success. So I hope all of you, young people who hear me will remember how you have gained your prizes, viz., by doing your best. Now, if you carry this idea out in your lives generally, and do your best,—of course, for others may beat you, but your best according to your abilities and opportunities, you will be astonished how quickly you will be able to come to the front. And you, who, are unsuccessful today will remember that there are other races to win and that in the long run there is always a reward for the man who perseveres and is a “trier”.

“If what shone afar so grand,
Turn to nothing in your hand,
On again the merit lies,
In the striving, not the prize.”

But no man can be strong in combat, as in competition, unless his heart is right and strong, and in the right order for work. In physical as well as in moral exercises and far more in intellectual achievements his heart must be right.

My young friends, I will not detain you longer. Remember, if you can, my advice. Do your best, and no body can do better than his best, and leave the result and the verdict to the judge. I heartily congratulate the successful students to whom I have just handed the prizes and shall expect them to give better accounts of themselves next year when those who have stood behind this year will no doubt enter the list.

**Address delivered before the Entally Bandhab Samity.
December 20th, 1933.**

GENTLEMEN OF THE ENTALLY BANDHAB SAMITY,

It was Lord Russell of Killowen, late Lord Chief Justice of England, who said that those who know law do not practise it, and those who practise law do not know it. The same formula might be applied to the game of Bridge, so far as I am concerned. I am disposed to believe that those who know how to play a good game of Bridge do not speak upon it, and those who speak upon it know the least about the game. You will believe me gentlemen, when I say that I am one such person. I cannot say that I have never played it, for that would be untrue, but what I do say is that, I have never seriously entered into the spirit of the game when I have myself played it, or when I have watched a good game being played by some of my friends. I do not know the reason why I have never been able to take to it quite seriously. It may be, because either the game is too poetic and I am too prosaic, or because the game is too prosaic and I am too poetic. I am disposed to think gentlemen, that it is the former more than the latter which impells me always to lose a game, no matter whether I play with my betters or with my inferiors. You gentlemen, who have taken a creditable part in the tournament, the merits of which we are here to recognise this afternoon,

will be able to tell me what it is in my nature or my temper which does not quite fit in with the atmosphere of a game of bridge. But let me assure you gentlemen, that I know sufficient about bridge to tell you that it is a highly artistic game, requiring patience and ability to study your opponent's mind, more than his hand, so correctly and effectively that it would enable you to steal a march over him. I am sure I know sufficient about Bridge to take a defeat quietly, patiently and cheerfully. That is a virtue I have carefully learnt and sedulously cultivated. It is also a game of bluff. Your opponent tries to bluff you and upon your ability to estimate how much in your opponent is bluff and how much is genuine, as indicated in his physiognomy, depends the success that you achieve. Thus far gentlemen, I know of Bridge and no further. Speaking for myself, I can never study physiognomy, and I take every player at the game to be a simple little creature, unless and until I have found that he has beaten me hollow. And this in spite of the very high reputation that I enjoy among my "bridgite" friends of being a cautious player. Believe me gentlemen, I am cautious and want to play a cautious game, but perhaps far too cautious so as not to venture a skilful game and risk a win. The discomfiture disappoints me, and makes me fight shy of my opponent, so that, I avoid taking a hand against him thereafter, and discretion being the better part of valour, I avoid playing against him rather than make a determined attempt to study his mind and art. I long to play with him as his partner rather than against him. In this way, I am beginning to feel that I am a capital person to

play with every body, never against any body, that is as far as I have progressed in the game of Bridge. My greatest delight is when 'having none' I get an opportunity to trump my opponent's ace, though in pursuit of that delight I have never hitherto trumped my partner. That would be a remarkable feat to be sure. But gentlemen, the game that some of you have played, as appears from your record is truly remarkable, and I congratulate you upon having been successful in making the game so popular in this city. In this connection, I would like to impress upon you the dangers of allowing high stakes to enter into your practice of the game, for, the moment you do that all the healthy spirit—the sporting spirit vanishes and disappears, and you reduce the game to the artifices of a professional card player. Beware of that when you appreciate the fascination of the game, the fascination that impels 'bridgites' to devote hours at a stretch to it. It is a pleasing feature to note that to this game you gentlemen of the Entally Bandhab Samity have added various other features. As a social club the Samity has achieved considerable success. As a care-relieving institution the Bandhab Samity deserves to be cordially supported by every member of the locality. Again as an institution where exchange of ideas of a more serious nature is encouraged and cultivated, I have no doubt that the Entally Bandhab Samity occupies a place high among social institutions of this nature. There is no doubt that my friends, the ordinary Bengali gentlemen, deserve a complete relaxation after their day's work is over, and I, for my part should like Samities of this description

and with similar objects being established in all parts of the town, in every *Para*, if that were possible. You will remember gentlemen, that in the days of our fathers and grand-fathers, there were, as a matter of fact, Samities and clubs of this description to which membership was both voluntary and free. Those were in the houses, I mean, *Baitak-khanas* of popular and well-to-do men of the locality where invariably a number of select friends used to meet and make themselves merry over their game of cards or Dash-Panchis and a game of chess. These Samities never cost the gentleman in whose *Baitak-khana* they used to meet anything beyond a few pice worth of *Pan* and a few pice worth of tobacco. But the cordiality they generated amongst the regular attendants thereof was of a remarkable character. Through good and evil days they stood by each other, and the sympathy one felt for the other was unbounded. Each one was a brother unto the other, and you often found that without being relations they were attached to each other such as even relations seldom are. The Bandhab Samity I am glad to notice, is realising that happy condition in its own sphere, and I congratulate the members again for having set up an ideal before us which I should advise them to popularise within the City as best as they can. You have made a good beginning by inaugurating the Rajendro Shield, a fine illustration of a noble spirit of cordiality that game alone can generate. Following this event, if you will permit it, I will suggest you to put forth all your energies to organise Bridge associations of respectability everywhere so as to form in course of time in its constituent

parts the nucleus of a distinguished tournament approximating the I. F. A. Shield for which I am told arrangements and an organization are in contemplation.

Gentlemen, I am thankful to your President Rai Bahadur A. N. Das for having given me this opportunity to meet you and make your acquaintance. The Rai Bahadur is an old friend of mine who is endowed with qualities of both head and heart, which go to establish cordiality amongst friends, and peace among antagonists. Gentlemen, I thank you again for having given me this opportunity to come before you and say a word that was uppermost in my mind. But before I resume my seat, I shall, with your leave and on your behalf, congratulate the Rai Bahadur upon the honour done to him by the Government.

Manorama Memorial Cup (Football).

August 28th, 1932.

GENTLEMEN,

You are doubtless anticipating the usual speech from the Chair, and I will not keep you in suspense very long, nor tire your patience. The Report of the Tournament showing its position, and the results achieved hitherto have already been placed before you. And for all this, no small credit is due to my friend the Hon'ble Susil Sinha, your worthy President, whose enthusiasm for the success of the Tournament is only exceeded by his determination to make it a premier tournament for our young friends in the City. You will have noticed that the competition in which the Club has been engaged was numerous, and I have reason to believe, more considerable than in the previous years. Your membership list is increasing, and with it your subscription list. These are very satisfactory features, and I wish that in the coming year the promoters of this Tournament will be able to show a more glorious account than they have hitherto had. What I desire to see in connection with this Tournament is a sound respectable balance sheet. I am glad to see gentlemen, that games and sports are in this country assuming the importance of national institutions and I do not think that football was ever more popular than it is at the present day. Thanks to the

remarkable achievements of the Mohan Bagan, the Aryan, the Kumartuli, and the Wari, football bids fair to be a game in which the Bengalee youths shall in the near future be very very proficient. The young folk who have given such a creditable account of themselves in the "Manorama Cup" Tournament may well be considered as the rising hopes of their elders and seniors in the game, who may sooner or later be making room for those whom we see around us. What man has done man may do. I hope the day is not far distant when these young friends of ours will take their share of credit in the game which has become practically the national sports of Bengal, but my young friends, you must learn to take defeat in as sportsmanlike a spirit as victory, for both are equal tests of character, which, after all, is the foundation upon which the nation must be built. There is a good deal to be said about the game, but as many of you present here, are much more familiar with the theory and the practice of it, I will spare you my theories as to the mode of playing it, and, my moral reflections, I am sure, you will be content to take, like the report, as read. Gentlemen, I thank you for the honour you have done me by calling me to this Chair, which I do not propose to leave without heartily congratulating those who have earned their credit in this Tournament. The Winners and the Runners-up in this Tournament deserve our hearty commendation.

**At the Annual Meeting of the Cornwallis Square Water Sports.
August 25th, 1934.**

GENTLEMEN,

Some days ago when my friend Lt.-Col., Barwell, your Vice-President, very kindly requested me to come and preside over this function, I was doubtful if he had made the right selection. Not having been a swimmer at any time, nor having been a sportsman in any period of my life, I felt, if, what I could say about swimming and sports in general, should interest you. But then, the thought that, if upon these grounds I hesitated to accept the invitation, I should not be doing justice to myself. Gentlemen, I have all my life been a keen and enthusiastic supporter of sports, in any form, on land or in water, without being a sportsman myself. And so far as water-sports are concerned, they are all allied to and connected with swimming. I cannot imagine any body lacking in the offer of the highest encouragement to the spread of the spirit of water-sports and practice of swimming. Before our eyes the spectre of the Seebpur boat disaster some years back is still vivid. Gentlemen, how mournfully and sorrowfully we remember those days when that tragedy took place and plunged a number of families into grief and calamity.

It gratifies me beyond reckoning to see how enthusiastically our youngmen have taken to swim-

ming which is only the preliminary stage of water sports, some of the finest of which we have been privileged to witness this afternoon. The achievements of Mr. Prafulla Ghose have filled us Bengalis, with pride, pride in the future of young Bengal. Mr. Ghose has set an example to you which I have every hope will not be lost on you. What he has been able to achieve should be achieved by many. Only the other day you heard from my friend Dr. Sir Upendra Nath Brahmachary how swimming was assiduously practised in early days in different countries and particularly in India. Even now in the villages of Bengal, in the countryside you come across, quite a large percentage of the male population able to swim, and a fair proportion of even the womenfolk being able to swim with ease. It is only in Calcutta where you find the practice of swimming, like many other healthy and health-giving practices, neglected. The example of Profulla Kumar Ghose, and of my young friends, some of whom have entertained us with their feats today, are worthy of commendation and imitation. There is nothing in the world which helps one to form his character as sports, and here I make no distinction between sports on land and in water. One is as good and helpful as the other. Gentlemen, mere struggle for political rights, or, if you want a more favourite expression, I will call it emancipation, is not every thing. Ours should be a many sided struggle, political, economical, and physical. It is difficult to say which is more important than the other. But, for my present purpose, I shall consider the last to be more important than the rest, for, with physical

improvement and development you are always a better citizen and therefore, a better economic being. When your economic conditions and virtues are of the best, rest assured your political rights are within your grip. If we look at sports from this point of view, I am sure it will not be long before we shall feel that we are a nation strong in physique, and all that follows from it.

I repeat again, that I am most highly gratified at being in your midst today and I thank my friends of this Association, and specially Lt.-Col. Barwell, for having given me this opportunity to join you in congratulating those who have acquitted themselves creditably in the sports before us, and in offering my most sincere encouragement to those who have not come up to the mark. Better luck next time, but do not lose sight of the fact that the practice of this form of sport helps you to save yourself, no less than it helps you to save others.

Before I resume my seat I shall ask you gentlemen to join me in offering our heartfelt thanks to Mrs. Barwell who has so kindly distributed the prizes to the winners and has encouraged us by her genial presence here this afternoon.

Kumartuli Athletic Sports.

GENTLEMEN AND MEMBERS OF THE
KUMARTULI INSTITUTE,

I have recently been speaking fairly frequently at sports meetings. The subject of sports is one upon which you cannot exhaust all you have to say. It is a pastime every aspect of which has its peculiar value in the making of the man and the up-building of the nation. There is no recreation that I know of or I can think of more invigorating than sports. It is a pastime upon which you build your youth to enable you to last till old age in sound health. It is a pastime again which enables you to build up your character more than almost anything else that we can think of. It is a pastime again which teaches you how best to accommodate yourselves to varied conditions and environments of your lives. It is yet a pastime with the help of which you get more opportunities to study human nature and character and profit by them. In short, gentlemen, I do not know of any occupation the result of which has such an abiding influence upon our character, judgment and above all humanitarian feelings as sports. If I were asked to point to any particular occupation which conduces to the well-being of the social man more effectively than another I would say, it is sports. Gentlemen of the Kumartuli Institute, I congratulate you upon the very successful arrange-

ments you made for the display of sports this evening, and the significant encouragement that you offer to young men of Calcutta, to win numberless cups and other trophies the possession of which would, I have no doubt, be a matter of pride, for all those who have won them. They undoubtedly are the future hopes of the nation, and so far as I am concerned, I derive no small amount of courage and hope that the young men who have acquitted themselves so creditably this afternoon, quite as much as their brethren of the sporting denomination in the country, will help to build up an India of which we all shall be proud. If I were given the chance of beginning my life over again, rest assured gentlemen, I shall not neglect to let sports enter into my life such as you have done. I regret that in my early days I neglected it and feel that I should have adopted it. It is on that account that I never miss an opportunity to encourage the sporting habit in every young man,—all in the belief that the sportsman as a rule is more loyal, more faithful and altogether more manly than one who is not. But gentlemen, when I see the list of brilliant men who have preceded me in this chair, beginning with His Excellency the Governor of Bengal, continuing with eminent personalities like Sir George Rankin and Sir Rajendra Mukherjee, I marvel at my own impudence to have agreed to preside over this function this afternoon. It may be presumptuous on my part, but I am glad that I am here to take advantage of the opportunity you have given me to have a frank talk with my young friends, the competitors this afternoon. As I say, I have a sneaking partiality for sports in their

various forms as practised in India in days gone by. They had gone out of fashion and one feels hopeful that they are, at least some of them are, coming back into vogue. My own impression is that there is not less science and agility in some of the Indian sports such as Ha-du-du and others of that description than the sports which we have adopted in modern days. It is only a suggestion that I make to the Kumartuli Institute of which my esteemed friend the Hon'ble Mr. Justice Dwarka Nath Mitter is the head, that being a premier body for the encouragement of sports in Calcutta, it is upto them to encourage in every possible manner the revival of the sports of India.

Be that as it may gentlemen, let me congratulate my young friends, the winners in the various events and also all those who have taken part in them. I thank you gentlemen, for having supported me so patiently and considerably in this Chair, and also for having given me this opportunity to witness what I have witnessed this afternoon with the greatest delight.

Prize distribution of the Shambazar Tennis Club.

GENTLEMEN,

I have recently been speaking so often at these meetings of games and sports that I do not know if I have got anything new to tell you this afternoon. I am however pleased to see the few sets of games played before us. Some of the players are such as would do credit to any lawn tennis association. Tennis no doubt is a gentle game, nonetheless to be an expert in tennis one has got to be agile and active no less than in any other game. Tennis again is a game which to my mind suits certain temperaments better than others. It is soothing to the eye and agreeable to the senses when you play on the green, grassy, velvety, and, for all that, springy court which leaves such a marked contrast to the hard court. Hard court tennis is good enough for something like a practice, but gentlemen, I fully believe that the hard court player is never in good form on the green court, practice and play on which, if environment and occupation should be believed to influence one's judgment and mould one's temperament and character, helps one's mind to be green, his temperament to be placid and his judgment to be elastic. The best game is played on the green court, and the devoted player prefers this to any other, just as the genuine lover of the game desires to see it played thereon. Tennis again is a game which suits

certain physical systems better than others. Whether you want a gentle or a violent exercise of your muscular system you cannot do better than to take to tennis. When you want just enough exercise for your muscles and your lungs, you play only one set. When you want more exercise than that, you play two sets and I am quite sure that after one has had as many as five or six sets, as some of you have had this afternoon, he has had almost as much exercise as any other game or sport can give him. It is here, I think, that the superiority of tennis over many other games of a gentle nature lies. Gentlemen, you will pardon me if I do not say more. I am really in a desperate hurry to go back to look after the arrangements for my nephew's wedding this evening. In fact, I was doubtful if I should be able to compress myself for this function within the short time—very short time at my disposal this afternoon. But I am glad that I have been able to squeeze myself in, as I was eager, that somehow I should, if only to give myself the pleasure of being in your company for however short a time. I wish I could stay longer, but long or short, believe me gentlemen, I shall not fail to carry with me pleasant recollections of what I have seen this afternoon. But I cannot go away without heartily congratulating those who have distinguished themselves this afternoon in this field. Not less do we appreciate the merits of those who come after them.

Let me thank you, Mr. President and Mr. Vice-President of this organisation for having given me the opportunity to come here and be present at the competition.

**Address delivered at the Annual test of the
Mohan Bagan Sports.**

GENTLEMEN,

It gives me great pleasure to be with you this afternoon and to discharge a function which has been imposed upon me by my dear and very old friend, Mr. D. N. Basu, your popular Secretary. Gentlemen, of Mr. Basu, I will say no more than that his sweet and affable temper makes him one of the most loveable creatures that you have ever come across, and that is not all. His ardent nature and genuine sincerity are responsible for the enthusiasm with which he takes up all matters connected with sports. He has been your popular Secretary for a number of years, and I have every reason to believe that you have never wanted a change. I will go further and say that, you *shall* never want a change. The history of the Mohan Bagan Club is almost the life history of Mr. D. N. Basu, and indeed of the Basu family. Mr. D. N. Basu has made Mohan Bagan a part of his life. Gentlemen, I cannot think that we in this Mohan Bagan Club can be under better guidance and better counsel. If Mohan Bagan is an institution dear to every Bengali, it is because Mohan Bagan has by sheer dint of merit endeared itself to every one of us. There is no other institution that I know of which has a more brilliant and glorious record than the Mohan Bagan. How well

I remember the day in the year 1911, it is now 20 years back that the whole Bengali nation, for the matter of that, the whole of India, went in raptures over the significant victory in the Shield matches. How well we remember following every movement and every step of the Mohan Bagan Team in other parts of India, such as in Bombay and in Simla, where the team of which we are proud was within an ace of winning the Rover Cup and the Durand Cup. Tennis however, has not been recognised to be one of Mohan Bagan's great achievements, and I wonder why it should be so. The early history of the Mohan Bagan Club commences with Tennis, and it is there where I desire the Club to earn as great a distinction as it has in other spheres of sporting activities. With great credit to itself it has maintained its position ever since 1911, among the leading foot-ball teams. Both in foot-ball and in hockey it has had an unbroken record.

I regret gentlemen, not to have been able to be present when you were witnessing the performances which the players have displayed to their credit this afternoon. Tennis, they say is a royal game, and it is a matter of record that in the early histories of England and France it was very popular with various kings. Louis X. was passionately fond of it. So desperately fond of tennis he was, that he risked his life over it. He died from a chill contracted after playing, and Charles V. was so deeply devoted to it that he could not bear the games of tennis being played by any body other than an aristocrat. In vain did he try to put a stop to the game being played by the lower classes. It became so popular. And will you believe it gentle-

men, as has been observed by a very distinguished Englishman, I think it was John Bright who said, that at one time in the 16th century Paris is said to have contained more tennis players than there were drunkards in England. Tennis therefore is a very old game, and a game with a long pedigree. It has been played by kings and its praise has been sung by kings and the king of poets, I mean Shakespeare, who in his famous play "Henry the V" makes Henry say in reply to messengers from the Dauphin who had sent him present of Tennis Balls :—

“When we have matched our rackets to these
balls,
We will, in France, by God’s grace, play a set,
Shall strike his father’s crown into the hazard,
Tell him he hath made a match with such
wrangler,
That all the courts of France will be disturbed
with chases.”

You will realise gentlemen, that Shakespeare uses technical terms in the foregoing. But that only establishes the fact that the terms were familiar in Elizabeth’s time. This is only a digression. The fact however remains that tennis is one of the most fascinating games that you can think of, and, I, in my humble capacity have sung its praises and virtues recently so often that I will not repeat them here lest they should be stale and threadbare.

In our own days we have come across historic figures, great men as great tennis players. None of you, I feel sure, will dispute the title of Sir Edward Grey, now Lord Grey of Falloden, the man who held

the reins of the English Foreign office during the war, to be a champion of a high order. He has in his time been a champion tennis player and he held his title to the championship, not for a single year, but for a number of years. The Hon'ble Alfred Lyttleton, a scion of the Cobhams, was no less prominent upon the championship courts of the Queen's Club in West Kensington than he was as Colonial Secretary to the British Government under the late Lords Salisbury and Balfour. I wish gentlemen, that some amongst those of you who have acquitted themselves so creditably this afternoon and whom we have met here to do honour will follow in the footsteps of those whom I have mentioned amongst others more or less prominent. This gentle game ought really to be more popular amongst our countrymen and I long for the day when we shall have in our midst more tennis players than there are race-goers.

I thank the management of the Mohan Bagan Club most heartily for having called me to this Chair and given me the opportunity to spend the afternoon in the midst of friends whose willingness to forgive all my faults and other disqualifications with a genuine spirit of cordiality is a source of encouragement to me.

At the Prize Distribution of the Boys Union Sports Association.

GENTLEMEN,

It has given me great pleasure to accept the kind invitation of the Boys' Union Sports Association, to come and preside over the pleasant function this afternoon. It is a pleasure which I could not with justice to myself deny, even though I am not a sportsman, and have never been one. But gentlemen, I have always taken a keen interest in sports of every description. Gentlemen, there is nothing in the world which cements the fellow feeling between man and man so much as sports. I have always found that the sportsman is a person who is charitable in his disposition, sympathetic in his feelings, and generous towards his rivals in the field. These are qualities which have to be acquired, unless one is endowed with them, and they are best acquired in the field, and not within the walls of your study. Gentlemen, it is well-known that a healthy mind can only reside in a healthy body. That being so, I have no doubt that in developing your mental powers you will do all you can to build up your physical frame. By that I do not mean that you must be devoted, or, I was going to say addicted, to your sports as a professional man would, but that you should spare no pains to make yourselves men and, above all,

good citizens, which I believe, is more in the line of the sportsman than in that of one who is not.

Gentlemen, having regard to the fact that my esteemed friend Sir Provash Chandra Mitter is the President of the Association, I have special reason to be interested in your Association. The function which you have imposed upon me is one which I gather from your reports has been discharged by eminent men whom I respect and whose friendship I value. Compared to my esteemed friend, Sir Rajendra Nath Mookerjee and the Hon'ble Raja Sir Manmatha Nath Roy Chaudhury who have preceded me in this Chair I am an insignificant person. But I may tell you that I do not yield even to them in my interest in sports.

To those who have competed for the various events this afternoon I must give a word of encouragement. All of them have tried to come out top in their respective events but they cannot all be first; that is not in the nature of things. It is inevitable that one of them should win and the rest come after him. But my young friends, you must remember that the race is not always for the swiftest, it is often for the steadiest, and in that view I shall advise each one of you to try and be steadier, and even steadiest next year so that all the competitors in each event may be bracketted equal. The most interesting feature of the sports to which we have witnessed this afternoon are the events in which the competitors were ladies and girls. They acquitted themselves creditably, and they deserve every encouragement at our hands. I congratulate the winners of the various events, and highly appreciate the endeavours made by others to

win the trophies. I only wish that they had all got them and in a true sportsmanlike spirit, I will venture to predict that they will all get them next year.

Gentlemen, I thank you and particularly my friend Mr. S. C. Mitter, your Vice-President heartily for having invited me to discharge a function which has given me great pleasure.

**Address delivered at the Annual meeting of the
Children's Protection Society.**

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

The privilege of seconding the proposal that is before you, namely, for a vote of thanks to the Hon'ble Lady Jackson has devolved upon me, and I feel proud to discharge that privilege. Ladies and gentlemen, I will not recapitulate to you the qualities of head and heart for which Lady Jackson is noted. No more shall I cover the ground which has already been laid before you by our worthy President Mr. Justice Costello. I will simply say that, mother as she is, she is more devotedly interested in the protection of children whether in India or anywhere else. The East may be East and the West may be West, but a mother is a mother all the world over, whether in the East or in the West, whether in the North or in the South, whose one interest in life is to maintain an improved moral tone in children whether of herself or of other mothers, her sisters. It is the mother again who is more directly interested in the Prevention of the public and private wrongs to children, and as I take it, these are the principal objects for which this Society was founded, and it exists. To the mother the beautiful character of the child is the music of the world. With Lady Jackson's support and sympathy now, and in the future, I have no doubt our Society will thrive so as to be a blessing to generations yet unborn, and to

humanity. If we in this Society should be able to carry out the provisions of the Bengal Children Act, and to supplement the *bona fide* insufficient means of parents to educate their children, and to help them to keep their children from moral danger and bad surroundings, and otherwise help juvenile offenders and incorrigible children, even though the last named are not covered by the Bengal Children Act, we shall have more than justified our existence. I have no doubt ladies and gentlemen, that in this mission of ours we have the sympathy and encouragement of Lady Jackson such as nothing else has, and my gratitude on behalf of the Society and of the Indian community to Lady Jackson is immense, and I have no doubt Lady Jackson will continue to take that interest in the welfare of the Society, in the protection of children in India which she has always done. With these words, ladies and gentlemen, I beg to second the proposal so ably moved by our President for a hearty vote of thanks to the Hon'ble Lady Jackson.

Address delivered at the Calcutta Orphanage.

April 22, 1931.

GENTLEMEN,

I am thankful to you for the honour you have done me by calling upon me to occupy your chair this afternoon, and when I think of the eminent men, each one distinguished in his own sphere of activity, who have preceded me in this chair, I have special reason to be thankful to you. And even when I appreciate your liberality I cannot think that your choice of me has been quite wise. It has been more generous than wise. And because it is generous I feel that I have a difficult task to perform which, with your assistance I shall endeavour to discharge to the best of my ability.

The Mother of Nation's Orphans.

Founded by that nobleman *Bhai Pran K. Dutt* and his devoted consort *Sm. Khantomoni Dutt* whom I would call the mother of the nation's orphans, the Calcutta orphanage has now passed into a state of full-grown vigorous institution. The splendid work it has been doing year in and year out is recorded in the annual reports which show the early struggles it has had to make in order to satisfy a crying need in the second City of the Empire. In the early struggles

gentlemen, many of those whom we love and respect, and of those whose memory we admire and adore bore their part manfully, so as to do credit not only to themselves but also to the community to which they belonged. Among those the name of my esteemed friend Sir Rajendra Mookerjee whose life is an example of what honest efforts and ardent devotion to duty on the part of one not born with a golden spoon in his mouth, can do in business, stands out prominent. The name of Dr. Chuni Lal Bose will ever figure in the history of this institution as one to whose devotion and unflinching care and attention the Calcutta Orphanage owes not a little of the life of great usefulness which it has achieved. And fortunately for them they had for their co-adjutor so ardent a person as my friend Rai Bahadur Kumar Manmatha Nath Mitter whose sympathy and co-operation in all things which contribute to the betterment of the well-being of our people is well known. And if gentlemen, the example of Mr. A. N. Das could be followed by each one of those taking interest in this institution and able to afford it there would be many homes in Calcutta which should serve the purpose of a small orphanage. Mr. Das the well-known Zamindar of 24-Perganas adopted a poor girl of 7 years and is now bringing her up as a member of his own family. It is a fine example worthy of imitation by every one of you, for, I cannot believe that there is any one present here who cannot afford to undertake the upkeep of one girl or one boy,—an unfortunate boy or an unfortunate girl. You can always undertake the upkeep of one between two or three of you.

Useful work of the Association.

I find from the report that the association is doing most useful work in the direction of the education of the inmates, vocational and technical when found desirable, and general in others. An outstanding feature of this institution is the moral lessons given by distinguished men to the inmates, who, I have no doubt, are brought up to lead an ideal life, such as would do credit to the memory of the noble pair who founded the Calcutta Orphanage. What pleases me, and I am confident most of you, is the record of your report which says that for the primary education of the inmates there are 2 Lower Primary Schools in the premises of the orphanage; one for boys and the other for girls, that six boys and two girls passed the Lower Primary Examination during the year and that the work of the Lower Primary Schools was generally satisfactory. Fourteen boys were day scholars in different High English Schools of the locality. One of them appeared at the Matric. Examination held last March, and I heartily wish him success. In this endeavour to educate the girls, the authorities of the Duff School deserve the best thanks of the Orphanage, of this meeting, and of the entire community of Calcutta. There is a further matter which requires special mention. It is that all the boys above 10 years of age regularly attend practical classes in tailoring, book-binding and carpentry, lessons in which are provided for the institution with the help of qualified teachers. The clothes of the inmates and the furniture, some of which we have before us and the binding of books required for the

use of the orphanage office, as well as for the inmates, were all made by the boys under the guidance of their master in these technical classes. Here, I think, is a great opportunity for the general public to help the institution for, the authorities will undoubtedly welcome orders from outside in tailoring, book-binding and carpentry, while in the girls' department the weaving, spinning, sewing and clay-modelling that are taught to the girls by the mistresses speak highly of the interest they take in their work and the well-being of those whom they have undertaken to bring up as useful members of society. Gentlemen, the Calcutta Orphanage is a philanthropic institution. It is more, —it is also an institution for the education of those whom the cruel hand of fate has reprovèd. Let not the hand of man, fathers, mothers and brothers, desert them. We stand by them. And in this connection I cannot do better than place before you the earnest appeal which our late Governor, Lord Lytton addressed to you. He said :—

“If my words have at all awakened in you a desire to help this admirable institution, let me suggest that the most practical as well as the most congenial form of help is to accept responsibility for one or more children. That is to say, in consideration of what life has given to you, provide the Committee with the means of giving to one child in perpetuity the chance which Fate has denied it.”

Gentlemen, I thank you again for the honour you have done me by calling me to this Chair.

**At the Annual Meeting of the District Charitable Society.
April 24, 1931.**

GENTLEMEN,

I am thankful to you for the honour you have done me by proposing me to the Chair in which eminent persons have preceded me. It is in the light of their sincerity and heart full of sympathy that I find my own guidance in the discharge of the duties which you have entrusted to me.

I mourn with you gentlemen, the loss of your friend and President Rai Bahadur Chuni Lal Bose, whose interest in work requiring sympathy was unbounded. Only day before yesterday, I had occasion to recount the great debt which the Calcutta Orphanage owed to him.

Valuable services rendered by the Charitable Society.

Established in the year 1830, the District Charitable Society has had a history quite a century old, and during that period it claims, and very justly claims, to have rendered valuable services to the indigent members of the community to which we belong. It is a Society the work of which needs no recommendation at my hands. Ever since my infant days, or as far back as I can carry my memory, I have heard of the District Charitable Society as an institution of which we may be proud. The noble

work to which the Society turns its attention, year in and year out, can easily be seen from the figures published in your report, for, while during the previous year the Society spent a sum of Rs. 3,020/- upon 759 heads, in the year you have just closed you have helped as many as 953 persons on whom depended the subsistence and well-being of as many as 1047 persons, in other words, you have assisted nearly 2000 persons with over Rs. 4,000/- per month in the aggregate. Gentlemen, the list of old and infirm people who are in receipt of assistance from the Society is appalling, but one's heart sinks into depression when he finds that their number is exceeded by helpless widows who have to maintain other dependants. This however, gentlemen, is the form of assistance which never fails to appeal to us. Assist the old and the infirm, the blind and the lame, the deaf and the dumb, the orphan and the lunatic. It is noble work which is its own reward. But rest assured gentlemen, the help you render to poor widows is a work the virtue of which can never be exaggerated. To the citizens of the town philanthropically disposed, the District Charitable Society owes a deep debt of gratitude. I have read your report from cover to cover, and there is not one point in which I feel so sadly disappointed as the finances of the Society. A Society which does such useful work for the community as the District Charitable Society ought to be more largely and liberally supported by the general public, and in this connection I have a small suggestion to make. It is this, that you should enlist a band of generous-hearted young men, straightforward and

reliable, and of them, let me assure you there is no dearth in the country now, to collect house to house subscriptions, be it however small, for the purpose of the Society. These young men may not have to do more than to go about in their own localities on Sunday mornings, and should make it a rule not to visit one house more than once a month. I make bold to say that in this way the Society should be able to collect a fair amount of subscriptions, to add to what you have at your disposal at the present moment in order to enhance the usefulness of the Society. The appalling distress that exists in the country, particularly among our middle class population, is a thing which an organization like the District Charitable Society, in my opinion, ought to be able to seriously tackle. I do not mean to suggest for one moment that they do not do so, but what I want is that more life, vigorous and resolute, and more ardour, steadfast and persevering, should be introduced into the whole spirit and organization of the Society. It ought to be a Society doing not only philanthropic work, but educational and industrial work also. I cannot for one moment think why those whom you help, and who are otherwise able, should not be trained to do something to earn a livelihood under your auspices and guidance, and, with a view to further extend the scope of the Society, I am of opinion that, the same principle may be followed in the case of widows who are neither old nor disable. In other words you help them to be independent of you, a work which is much more glorious than that in which you are at present engaged. The District Charitable Society may be a direct means of teaching its recipients

to help themselves. There is nothing higher and nobler in human life. During the past year, you have spent nearly Rs. 10,000/-, to be accurate Rs. 9,404/11/0, over your receipts. In the present state of your finance the loss of the Sunday fees is a heavy one, and I have every hope that the Collector of Customs will resume them as soon as conditions in his department have improved. From your report I find that the demands upon your resources are far in excess of the supply. They are quite inadequate for the splendid work to which you members of the executive committee of the Society have devoted yourselves, and the suggestion that I have made, if found practicable, and given effect to, may enable you to do what you aspire to do, namely, to render assistance in the way of supplying the recipients at least one meal a day, and also, gradually through your educative efforts, to relieve yourselves of a *quantum* of the burden, in order that you may devote it for similar purpose to others needy and indigent. Gentlemen, the supporters and sympathisers of the District Charitable Society deserve the best thanks not only of this institution but of every citizen of Calcutta, whose fellowmen and women have been so anxiously helped and taken care of by you. But gentlemen, I repeat again, that I see the vision of this institution enhancing its usefulness so as to be an ideal institution for help and self-help.

**At the Annual meeting of the Boy
Scouts Association.**

MR. SCOUTMASTER & MY YOUNG SCOUT FRIENDS,

I am truly delighted to be in your midst this afternoon on the occasion of your Annual Meet. From the Report of the past year it appears that you have had a successful year. Your number is also steadily growing and the increase in your number, as I understand, represents only the normal growth. This is certainly very satisfactory and must be encouraging to all those who are interested in the Scout Movement.

I find that my immediate predecessors in the Chair of this Social Function was a friend of mine for whom I have a very high regard, and I have no doubt you have the same respect for him. There is no more enthusiastic supporter in our Community of everything that helps the formation of character of our boys than my friend Mr. D. N. Basu, your District Commissioner. Whether it is sport or the Scout or the Volunteer Movement you will find my friend offering you a cordial and enthusiastic support. Your Provincial Secretary, gentlemen, is another such man who has been devoting no end of energies and enthusiasm toward making the Scout Movement a success and if our Scouts have attained the high pitch of efficiency that we see in them, I believe, my friend Mr. N. N. Bhose is responsible for a large part of it, wholeheartedly supported as he is by our Scout masters.

Gentlemen, in my idea, the Scout Movement is just the thing we had been waiting for long, long years and what we need most in this country. The object of the movement, as I understand it, is to create healthy, happy and helpful citizens, in other words to develop the body, mind and spirit of the boys. Remember gentlemen, that I draw a line of distinction between instruction and education. Our children no doubt receive their instruction in Schools, sometimes good, sometimes bad and sometimes indifferent, according as the school is staffed by educated, cultured and devoted teachers, but instruction alone cannot go very far. The true purpose of education is to develop character and initiative in the boy and produce God-fearing, healthy, prosperous and happy citizens.

The Scout movement is designed to achieve this end and as such, it provides an excellent supplement and corrective to the present day school instruction.

You have this evening admirably demonstrated some of your activities and the methods adopted in the movement which are based on a careful psychological study of the boy.

You have the ideal placed before you in the Scout Law. The idea of Universal Brotherhood and Service is there. To us this is as old as our ancient Civilisation and this has been the tradition of India. And there is the teaching of love and respect for elders and the idea of discipline and obedience.

In my judgment education properly so called must be founded on Discipline and Obedience.

I regret to say that there is a noticeable absence of these qualities in our boys now-a-days. But they are

as important as courage and independence. In your Scout Brotherhood from the highest to the lowest, from the Chief Scout to the youngest Tenderpad each must learn to be mindful of the happiness and welfare of others. To attain that habit of mind a Scout must be so trained as to get his inspiration of discipline from within. This is the main characteristic as I understand, of scout training where each boy is encouraged in self-development from within, i.e. by his own effort and not merely training through instructions imposed from without.

I have the highest admiration for your mottoes "Do your best", "Be prepared" and "Service". The realisation of and a loyal adherence to these mottoes is sure to help you to lead a healthy, happy and useful life.

Scouting is a Voluntary Movement and that makes your responsibility all the greater, both as scouts and scoutmasters, to play the game as best as you can and work up to the ideal, viz : Be loyal to the king, to your Country, to your Officers and to your parents. Be prepared to serve others. Try to be the little friend of the world. Courteousness should be a part of your life just as cleanliness of thought, word and deed should be the basis upon which your life and conduct should be founded and regulated.

Remember your promise and act up to it.

I thank you once more gentlemen, for having called me to this Chair and given me an opportunity to see and realise the excellent educational and social work that is being done by the Scouts and their masters.

**At the Installation of District Commissionership of the
Boy Scouts Association.**

August 7, 1934.

To His Excellency Sir John Anderson, The Chief Scout for Bengal, who has honoured me by conferring on me the District Commissionership of this great Association, I owe a deep debt of gratitude. It makes me feel proud beyond any pride I have ever felt in my life, and rest assured, gentlemen, it shall always be my duty to live up to the highest ideal of the Association which, with all its branches and ramifications, is doing wonderful work all over the world. Gentlemen, I am a Scout to-day and a comrade of my young friends with whose life of usefulness and idealism it shall always be my endeavour to join mine. The boy Scouts Association has done more to help our boys to build up a body, to develop a sympathetic mind, and a spirit of service, without which the life of a citizen is neither happy nor helpful. One of the mottoes from which we draw our inspiration is, "Be Prepared". Prepared we are, and prepared we shall be, to render service to our fellowmen, to our God, to our King and to our Country, now and for ever. Gentlemen, the Scout method to widen the mental vision of the youth, in view of making him a better citizen is the most natural method for it is based upon the psychological study of the boy. It is therefore, that I would appeal to every father, every

guardian to enrol his boy or ward as a Scout, to make his home happy, cheerful and contented, in addition to giving his country the selfless devotion and service of those with whose life the future well-being of the country is united.

The honour His Excellency has done me is unexpected, and all the more embarrassing to me on that account. It is also extremely generous of Mr. Justice Khundkar to speak of me in terms to which you have listened. What he has said should convince you, as it has convinced me, that even a Judge can err, for, much of what he has said is wholly undeserved. It is very gratifying, nevertheless, to feel, and to hear, what one is in the estimation of his friends and above all in the estimation of one of His Majesty's Judges. My regret is that my friend's pronouncement will not find a place in the Law reports, Calcutta series.

Gentlemen, I thank you all for the response you have made this afternoon to my humble invitation to meet my friend our Vice-President, Chief Justice Manmatha Nath Mookerjee, whose life of preparedness for the most arduous duties, whether to the state or to the individual, and ungrudging and unfeigned affability should be an object of imitation for us all.

For the promotion of Radio Broadcasting in India

GENTLEMEN,

It is extremely kind of you to have called on me to preside over this function which in the fitness of things ought to have been performed by a person distinguished in scientific culture, and who, carried far greater weight in the country than I do. But since it has pleased you to command me, I shall obey your behest as best as I can. Only I shall expect you to excuse any shortcomings you may discover in the discharge of the onerous function you have imposed upon me.

Years have elapsed since the first introduction of broadcasting in India, but not more than half a dozen or seven years have we covered since broadcasting took a firm hold in this country. It is now fully established though, like most other concerns of great utility it has had to pass through various vicissitudes. Started originally by Messrs. Marconi & Co. Ltd. at Calcutta on a humble scale broadcasting could not make its presence and utility felt in India as widely as it had done in other countries, particularly in European countries where it had become the rage of the town, the city and the village alike. The reception, I regret to say, gentlemen, was poor, so that, in less than two years time the resulting crash came and the Marconi Co. had to wind up its affairs while it should have

been firmly seated upon the solid foundation of public sympathy and support. Into the causes of why the Marconi Co. failed to create that sympathy and enlist that support I do not propose to enter.

You will remember gentlemen, that the original company was a small concern at the head of which were such men, good and true, of experience and skill in the management of what promised to be an affair in which human interest was great, was increasing, and was bound to be intense. If they did not fully appreciate the wants and tastes of the people whom they undertook to educate, it is because they did not think that like every other new idea a taste for it had to be thoughtfully created, carefully nursed and sedulously cultivated in order to allow it to take a deep root in the minds of the people. What was necessary was to create a "broadcast mind" or a "Radio mind" if I may use the expression. Financial difficulties moreover, were not the least among the causes of its failure then. For whatever reason, good or bad, the Marconi Co. had to be wound up and at one time it looked as though broadcasting had no future in India. But no, it had created an unconscious "broadcast mind" in the country, and thus paved the way for a new company which was in course of formation. When formed it came to be known as the Indian Broadcasting Co., started under what may be called good auspices, on an adequate scale and with two important stations in Bombay and Calcutta.

It is well-known gentlemen, that all great scientific and commercial enterprises have had a humble beginning. Broadcasting in India is no exception to

that rule. I am given to understand that the feeble voice of Broadcasting in England was first heard from the roof of the Marconi House in the Strand in London,—the home of that company whose Chairman, the Marchese Marconi, has done so much throughout the world for the Wireless. It will be remembered gentlemen, that our own Sir Jagadish Chandra Bose was just about that moment of time working at this great phenomenon. Marconi had his eye to the commercial side of it while the great Indian scientist was developing it in its purely theoretical aspect until he gradually diverted it to plant life. This is a coincidence, strange though it is, for both were working independently of the other, to which the late Mr. W. T. Stead laid stress in a "character sketch" of the late Mr. Marconi in an early issue of the Review of Reviews, as having been admitted by the great originator of the Wireless. Similarly the feeble voice of Broadcasting was heard in 1922 from the roof of the Temple Chambers, the Calcutta offices of the Marconi Company, that tall building to the East of the High Court. The people of Bengal, and perhaps more particularly the citizens of Calcutta, should be proud to think that it was in this Building that the first experimental Broadcasting Transmitter was erected.

In response to appeals from the pioneers and a small section of the people of Calcutta, the Government of India thought it fit to grant a temporary Broadcasting license to the Marconi Company's Indian representatives—the Indian States and Eastern Agency. Once the license had been procured, the Marconi Company, at their own expense, generously

sent out to India their engineers with what was then considered to be an up-to-date Broadcasting Transmitter. This was duly erected at Temple Chambers, and it replaced the original experimental apparatus. It was the Transmitter that became known to Radio enthusiasts as the "old 5 A.F. set", by the aid of which Broadcasting was carried on at the Marconi Company's expense from 1923 to 1925.

A change now overtook the fortunes of the Company. Towards the end of 1925 the Company, with a view to create sympathy of all radio enthusiasts invited the various dealers and manufacturers then interested in Radio to bear their share of the cost of maintenance of the Radio Service which had hitherto been borne by the Company alone. I regret to observe that the invitation was to no purpose, but the company succeeded in enlisting the active support of both the Radio Club of Bengal, and the Government who generously offered to contribute towards its running charges a definite portion of the fees realised from licenses, until the Indian Broadcasting Company was formed in 1926 as the Indian Radio Telegraph Company.

The new company erected a powerful up-to-date Station at Bombay and at Calcutta, and opened their service in August 1927, under the management of Mr. Eric Dunstan. Neither expense nor efforts were spared by the Company to give Bombay and Calcutta an up-to-date Broadcasting Service; and in spite of the lavish expenditure on equipment, staff and programmes, the Company continued to work at a loss. A reorganization followed soon after along with heavy retrench-

ment. It was made without any appreciable improvement in the finances of the Company, and the Board of Directors, after reviewing their balance sheet in January 1930, finally decided to go into voluntary liquidation. But Broadcasting had come to stay, and had begun to make itself felt in India. Pressure therefore, was brought by the public to bear upon the Government, and through the efforts of Sir D'arcy Lindsay of Calcutta, Sir Purshottamdas Thakurdas of Bombay, and Sir B. N. Mitra, who was then the Hon'ble Member in charge of the Department of Industries and Labour, that Government was induced to take over the two Broadcasting Stations in March last year. This is an earnest of the desire of the Government to help the people if they will only help themselves.

Under the auspices of the Government the authorities of the Calcutta Station have made a remarkable progress in the direction of making Radio programme effective and attractive. The renowned musicians of India are included in its list. It is Radio which has made them Indian assets from provincial assets. Some have become international assets from national assets. You have distinguished educationists and scientific men discoursing to you through the medium of the Radio moral lessons, hygienic principles, and all that add to the culture and well-being of the individual. There is no other way known to us whereby you can inculcate these to so large a body of people of diverse nationalities, colours, creeds, passions and even prejudices as the Radio.

The Calcutta Station moreover, has recently

introduced in their programme some most interesting items, the Indian Childrens' Corner for the benefit of young boys and girls, and Indian ladies' hour for the cultural development of the Indian ladies both of which have been highly appreciated, particularly by those for whom they are meant.

Religious talks, theatrical performances, news of the world, and many other subjects of great interest are often broadcast from the Calcutta Radio. They educate us in proportion as we take an interest in them. In short Broadcasting is the cheapest medium of education.

The position of the Calcutta Station, I am glad to say is now firmly established and it is a pleasing news to all radio lovers that the number of licensees is gradually increasing so that it bids fair to be a great institution in the not very distant future. Our best thanks are due to Mr. Bhupendra K. Ghose, Babu Damodar Das Khanna, Babu A. K. Ghose, Raja Birla and others for presenting the medals, and I congratulate the recipients thereof.

Gentlemen, I thank you for the honour you have done me, but that is no reason why I should stand any longer between you and the pleasant entertainment for which you must be waiting.

At the Prize distribution of the Darmahatta Auction Bridge competition

Gentlemen, you will naturally expect me to say something of the skill shown by different players to meet whom we have gathered here this evening. They are all good and sound and true. But whoever, at cards, has ever been bad and unsound and untrue. I have not known him, and if any such person exists, he does not come out in the open to give an exhibition of his skill at them, even though historians have recorded that it is an amusement usually taken recourse to by fools, and that, at any rate, it is not a favourite pastime of wise men. I personally do not think, an occasional Bridge player as I am, that that observation can be regarded to be an unimpeachable historical fact, or even a fact of universal application. For, take it from me, that kings are no fools and least of all Charles VI. of France, in whose reign the game of cards is reported to have been invented,—as early as 1390,—whereby the king preferred to amuse himself during the intervals of a melancholy disorder in the country over which he ruled. The disorder no doubt brought Charles to his grave. But it gave birth to a new France, which took time to culminate under Louis XIV. and perfect in the Revolution. Disorder brings in disorder, but when it comes to the question of succession, order always follows disorder. Out of chaos

comes cosmos,—that is the natural law, and so at Bridge you have got to be on the alert to introduce order if your partner is in a hopeless muddle. At cards, ‘saving the situation’ is a great art, and as in military science a glorious retreat is worthy of greater credit than a victory, so at a game of cards, ‘saving the situation’ is an art on which praise could not be conferred too lavishly. And gentlemen, with a view not to get into that hopeless muddle of which I have spoken, there are a few golden rules which you should follow, as I have followed through life. Whenever possible play with a better player than yourself, though I must admit, and admit it ungrudgingly and cheerfully, that everybody that I have come across is a better player than myself. That, after all ought not to be and must not be your experience. If therefore, you want to do justice to yourself in the skill and art of a card player,—I do not say card sharper,—always play with a player better than yourself, but not with your eyes shut, for, if you do that, the “card sharper” opposite you will do the trick. The next best thing that you can do in the absence of an opportunity to play with a better player than yourself is to watch good players. Watch with assiduity and diligence, and rest assured you unconsciously imbibe the art which makes one a Bridge master. I am assured that our friends who come in for their share of credit and loss tonight, satisfied the judges that their skill in the art is developed to a degree which is remarkable,—enough to do credit to any player. Personally I think, that to solve live problems, by which I mean problems when they present themselves in the course of a game

is a better training than the solution of a dead problem. But whatever a Bridge player does, he must never forget the adage that 'practice makes one perfect.' He must practice whenever he can, always if possible, at home and abroad, if he chooses to be recognised as a good player,—a commodity much valued and highly prized in Bridge circles of which the present is a pre-eminent one.

Gentlemen, you have all the credentials in your favour as far as I can judge from your records. That being so I have wondered often what made you call yourselves an "All Fools Club," unless you are ambitious of establishing that you, to the exclusion of every body else, deserve that glorious but unenviable appellation. But then rest assured gentlemen, some portion of the world of mankind will have a serious quarrel, with you, and I do not know by what process of reasoning or statistics you are going to establish your claim. You may have the consolation of being in good company, the company of All Fool's Club in America where they are fools only when it pays them to play the part of fools. What I am concerned with is the certain knowledge I have that you are gentlemen even in your foolery. When you know how to take a success in a game of cards, the most innocent and the most pleasant pastime known to man, provided you do not indulge in high stakes, for then it is a gamble, with equanimity, and defeat with the best of grace, I know that you are real gentlemen, gentlemen by instinct and real sportsmen. A game of cards, success or loss in it calls for the exercise of the highest patience, best of temper and the

readiest desire to give and take. He who has these qualities is, in my estimation, the best player, I do not care whether he wins or loses. By that standard you will be judged and to that standard you will adhere, no matter what happens to your points. Gentlemen, in your name I congratulate the players, who took part in the tournament, the winners as well as the losers, for loss after all is, what they say, a fluke, more often than success.

Gentlemen, I am glad that I am in your company this evening. I could not avoid the insistent invitation of my friend Babu Narendra Nath Ganguli even though I am not in the best of health. From what I see of you to-day, your cordiality, your *bon-homie* convinces me that I should have missed much if I had not acceded to his request.

In Appreciation of Billiard Championship.

GENTLEMEN,

It has given me great pleasure to accept the kind invitation of our distinguished host Kumar Bishnu Prosad Roy to come and preside over the pleasant function this evening. It is a pleasure which I could not possibly have denied myself for the very good reason that though I am not a good hand at Billiards, I am interested in the game and I love to watch a skilful game well-played. I must say that the final game played before us this evening has given us great enjoyment. On your behalf as much as mine I extend my warmest congratulations to Babu Ganesh Chandra Dutt on the success which is his to-night.

To his opponent I must say that he put up a good fight, but they both could not win. It is inevitable that one of them should win and the other lose. I am sure you will all agree with me when I say that Babu Manu Lall Mullick has shown grit and skill in the game which should command every credit and deserve our praise. I wish him better luck next time. To the other competitors also I extend my congratulations and wish them greater success next year.

There are many exciting indoor games, but I think that Billiard which is appropriately called the king of indoor games, has a fascination of its own. You can play alone, you can play in a company for hours together. You cannot get tired whether you play alone

or in a company, for the more you play the greater your enjoyment and the stronger your appetite for it. Billiards affords us not only mental exercise requiring good concentration, quick, clear and decisive judgment, but physical exercise also. It is the only indoor game in which you find a combination of both; for a good game of Billiards after dinner will make you fit for a good supper. So it is no wonder why this game has become such a favourite not only with men but also with ladies. They have taken it up seriously as a pastime and are making good progress.

Now let us all express our feelings of gratitude to our beloved host Kumar Bishnu Prosad Roy whose keen interest, untiring energy, ever-willing assistance and ungrudging encouragement have done a great deal to popularise Billiards, thus making the strong ties of our friendship stronger yet. It is encouraging to note that as many as about one hundred of our young friends have taken part in the present tournament, and this is a sure indication of the hopefulness for extension of the sphere of indoor games. By organising Billiard tournaments and presenting liberally such a number of lovely and valuable cups to the winners and competitors year after year, Kumar Bishnu Prosad Roy has not only been stimulating an *esprit de corps*, but also cementing the bond of true friendship amongst ourselves.

Gentlemen, I do not want to detain you by inflicting upon you a long speech, as something, more tempting is awaiting you upstairs and young as you are, I shall expect you to do justice to it all,—and nonetheless to yourselves.

**Presidential Address at Dr. Bepin Behary Ghose
Memorial Meeting
October 12, 1931.**

GENTLEMEN,

We are met here this afternoon to decide upon the question of the disposal of the funds raised to perpetuate the memory of an eminent Bengalee, a physician, at once great and good. But gentlemen, Dr. Bepin Behary Ghose was not merely a physician to whose memory you are very rightly determined to raise a memorial, to serve as a beacon light for those coming after him as to how to place oneself in the service of humanity. It was the healing art to which the great departed was devoted. A nobleman at heart that he was, he early in life made the right choice of the profession which would best suit his temperament and his large soul. It was the profession of the gentleman, in which one could render inestimable service to humanity, such as for all times would be credited to Dr. Bepin Behary Ghose.

You have had an account gentlemen, from your Treasurer of the monies in his hands, all collected for the purpose of raising a memorial to one whom we have met to honour this evening. I feel gentlemen, that we cannot do it better than by dedicating the funds at our disposal to an object which our friend held most dear to his heart. The poor especially, have a strong

claim upon our sympathy and support. Nothing can be more distressing to see a beloved one on a bed of pain and sickness, and to know that he or she is unable, through want of family means, to get the benefit of the best advice and the best skill with the aid of the appliances. Even in homes where money is more plentiful, we know, some of us from bitter experience, how much a single case of tuberculosis upsets the routine of a household. We may readily imagine how in small houses the difficulty is increased a hundred-fold. It is really imperative therefore, that the friends and admirers of Dr. Ghose should do what they can to provide accommodation for the careful and considerate nursing of our sick poor, our brothers and sisters and children. Nor, gentlemen, can we evade our responsibility in the matter. I am certain no person in this room desires to shirk his share of responsibility in carrying out this necessary work. It is not, as if we can ever eradicate illness, or render liability to this fell disease impossible. But no matter, what steps may be taken to minimise the risks of the disease and danger we know that, in a sense, they will be ever present. It is a growing disease in Calcutta. On the double ground, therefore, of helping those who, through no fault of their own, are unable to assist themselves, and of establishing safeguards against the spread of this infectious disease, it is our duty to see that our hospitals never lack the means of carrying on their splendid work. If a wing or a story is needed for the purpose, it must be added; if beds are essential they must be provided; if ever a hospital is required in a town without one with a

tuberculosis ward, it must be built on the most approved lines, and equipped with the latest appliances, with a staff of skilled doctors and capable nurses to handle them. We are met to-day to consider the immediate wants which have been felt to exist in our own community. They are urgent, and the necessity for them may easily be demonstrated to exist. I appeal therefore, to friends and admirers of Dr. Ghose and the wider public of Calcutta with every confidence for the funds required to complete what we are only enabled to commence. Let the funds of Dr. Ghose memorial in the hands of our Treasurer be transferred to the authorities of the Carmichael Medical College and Hospital for the opening of a tuberculosis ward as an adjunct to it.

Gentlemen, I should be failing in my duty if I did not take this opportunity to express our very great appreciation of the services rendered by my friends Mr. K. L. Datta the Honorary Treasurer and to Mr. Kiron Ch. Dutt, the Honorary Secretary of Dr. Bepin Behary Ghose memorial fund. Their determination to make the memorial a success was indeed worthy of the great cause which we are met to carry out.

Gentlemen, I shall be failing in my duty if I do not, before I take my seat, sufficiently thank you for the honour you have done me by asking me to preside over the meeting this evening.

**Address delivered at a Meeting to promote Salt Industry
in Bengal.**

February 13, 1935.

GENTLEMEN,

I have been asked to preside over this meeting which has been convened for the purpose of drawing attention to the desirability of helping the development of a vital indigenous industry for which there are immense opportunities and possibilities in our province,—I mean the Salt Industry of Bengal. It is an industry in which not many years ago, perhaps about a century ago, Bengal flourished, so that, there are still existing many well-known and wealthy families in our province including the Mallicks, the Mars, the Mittras and the Tagores whose ancestors laid the foundations of their fortune on this industry, and this industry alone, alas, now dead in Bengal. Nimak Mahals were famous institutions on which fortunes were made. We need have no illusion about the fact that till about the middle of the last century Bengal never depended for one pinch of salt for her consumption upon imports from outside. In fact, she could afford to send out surplus quantities for consumption in the adjoining provinces.

You will be perhaps astonished to learn that no less than 20 thousand people of our own province, and mind you, those were not the days when non-Bengalees

imposed themselves upon us, were engaged in this important industry, and thereby earn their bread. Such is the inadequate picture of the province perhaps a century back, but times have since changed, even though Bengal remains one of the largest, if not the largest consumer of salt in the whole country. Those who have carefully studied the economic problems of the country are aware of the fact of the cruel depletion of the province for want of supply of Bengal salt which has been replaced by salt from other provinces and countries. Salt is a vital ingredient of our existence, and its importance in the daily life of mankind in every stage of civilisation can not be over-estimated. We are told by scientific men that salt is equally indispensable for industries, agriculture and even animal husbandry. And yet Bengal is absolutely dependent on foreign countries and on other provinces of India for the supply of her salt. Students of history will tell you that even in the early days of British rule, Bengal with her coast line, produced enough salt in her coastal districts not only for her own requirements but also for supply outside her boundaries. Salt manufacture in those days used to be carried on mainly as a cottage industry, which occasionally took the form of a small industry when the output was meant for sale in the up-country. The ruins of evaporation tanks, and various other preparatory devices, and allied structures are still observable in the maritime districts of the province.

If you care to compare the relative position of our province with that of other provinces of the country, it will, I am sure, pain you all to find the appalling

situation to which our province has been reduced. It is discouraging and cheerless in the extreme. Bengal now is entirely dependent on foreign supply, and whenever the suppliers had an opportunity in the past they fattened themselves upon Bengal. According to the finding of the Tariff Board on the Salt Industry, at least Re. 1/- crore extra was extracted from the consumers, mainly of Bengal during a period of $2\frac{1}{2}$ years between 1926 and 1928. It is but imperative therefore, that Bengal should be independent of foreign supply, and more so, when the Province can produce ample salt in her coastal districts.

I do not propose to tax your patience by proposing to take you through details. But I would remind you, that the assertion that the soil of Bengal is not fit for manufacture of salt is wide of truth, and does not represent the correct estimate of our soil. If you take the trouble of going through the reports of Experts in this line, you will all agree with me when I say that the seaboard of the province is not only fit for the manufacture of salt in large quantities, but that it possesses greater possibilities than many other provinces which are at present supplying salt in our market.

It has always been a common cry in our province that we Bengalees lag behind in industrial enterprises, and are apt always to follow the beaten track instead of finding out new avenues. I have no doubt that it is partially true, but we alone are not to blame. Many a new enterprise has had to die a premature death for want of proper nourishment both from the public and from the Government.

We cannot too highly congratulate our young friends who, alive to a sense of the immense possibilities of this most important industry in our province put their heads and pooled their resources together to find out ways and means to revive this lost industry. With that end in view, they formed an Association called the Bengal Salt Manufacturers' Association in 1931, under the able guidance of Mr. J. Choudhury, M.A., Bar-at-Law, whose enthusiasm for promoting and reviving Indian industries is well-known. It was because of their well-meaning enterprise and the valuable sympathy and help they received from my lamented friend, the late Sir Provas Chunder Mitter, and the Hon'ble Nawab K. G. M. Farouki, that the Government agreed to grant license for the manufacture of salt as a marketable commodity of Bengal.

Then followed the floatation of a number of limited companies, the first company being the Premier Salt Manufacturing Co. Ltd.

You all are aware of the obstacles that a new enterprise has to encounter, and how difficult it is to overcome them. But it really goes to the credit of the Premier Salt Manufacturing Company, the first enterprise in this line that it has courageously faced the difficulties and skilfully overcome the obstacles until it has succeeded in producing salt and placing it in the market. But this is not sufficient for the revival of the industry in the province. As I have said before, the total consumption of salt in Bengal is very large, it amounted to (13,21,696 plus 1,08,84,636) 122,06,332 mds. during the year 1933-34, and it is a tremendous

task to meet the demand unless the companies can invest large sums for the purpose of establishing factories.

Now the question naturally arises, whence to get the money to run the Concern?

There are but two sources from which monetary help may come. One is the sale of shares, and the other, Government help.

The question of the sale of shares is the concern of the Company which must be so constituted as to inspire confidence in the investing public. There must be businessmen at the head of affairs, men with shrewd instincts and practical outlook and vision. The other alternative is to move the Government for help and subsidy.

What transpired in the Legislative Assembly in March 1934, at the instance of our representatives, will be narrated to you by Mr. Satyendra Chandra Mitra whom I find present here. He will tell you that the Hon'ble Sir George Schuster agreed to "consider the question of the development of the Salt industry in Bengal," and in reply to a question by Mr. Satyendra Chandra Mitter, the Hon'ble Finance Member said, that "we contemplate now giving to the Government of Bengal a portion of the surplus which is in our hands for the specific purpose of developing certain schemes with regard to salt in Bengal."

It is in that view that I ask you to join us in representing to the Government that the time has now arrived when that help should be vouchsafed to deserving Salt concerns in Bengal,—concerns which are

well constituted and run on business principles, Government of course being satisfied before any portion of the tax-payers money is let out that it will be well spent and scrupulously guarded in the interest of the tax-payer.

Gentlemen, I am thankful to you for calling me to this Chair. I shall be always glad to know that the object for which you have met this afternoon is progressing and is being furthered.

**Address delivered at the 3rd death Anniversary
of Hevavitarana Dharmapala.
Monday, April 29, 1935.**

MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN,

“I am born to pray for my fellow mankind and eventually to merge into it.” These were the words of a great religious thinker and a man of deep devotion. The passage sums up in itself the spirit, conviction and determination of the soul which art in heaven, but from which we are seeking enlightenment this evening for the benefit of our life and character in relation to our fellowmen. The ends of individuals are shaped by Providence, rough-hew them how ye may. And when the Lord builds the house or helps in its rebuilding, vain indeed is the attempt of man to obstruct or regulate it. One of the noblest among modern religious personalities, Hevavitarana Dharmapala persevered in the work of bringing light to man, culled from the life of the greatest of world’s prophets, undismayed by other stronger forces, because he saw the vision of the Great one who was guiding him, if not through trials and tribulations, at any rate through sacrifices and devotion. “I am born to pray”, was the feeling to which Dharmapala gave expression in the straightest of manner and in the simplest of language when he chose for myself a life of resignation, a life of self-effacement and indeed of selflessness.

Indeed Dharmapala received his inspiration from above and marched forward in "divine affection bold."

Gentlemen, my recollection of Hevavitarana Dharmapala is pretty ancient, yet vivid. Ancient, because it goes back to 30 or 35 years, the period when he was on the most affectionate terms of brotherly relationship with my own grandfather and living as an honoured guest with a very near relation of mine, and vivid, because the spirit of friendliness, love and affection with which he participated in the mirth and frivolities of a callow youth such as I was then has left a deep and abiding impression upon my mind. It is an impression which has shaped my life and perhaps my character also, if it is worth anything. Gentlemen, it is from him that I learnt to work and not to look for the rewards of labours, but to leave them to fructify for the benefit of those who should care for them. Such gentlemen, is my recollection of him.

It is not generally given to man to see his labours bearing fruit in his lifetime. But gentlemen, Hevavitarana Dharmapala could at least feel happy in the evening of his life, that the efforts that he had put forth in the cause of the great faith, which is also the faith of the Hindu, had not gone in vain,—though they had not begun to bear immense fruit. A *bhakta* of Sri Gautama Buddha, he did not work in the hope of reaping the fruit of his labour. You have only the right to work, but not for the fruits thereof, says Sri Bhagavan in the Bhagwat Gita. Dharmapala recognised this. He only lived up to the ideal of such a teaching himself, but he always held it up before his followers and associates as the right ideal. In him

there was no presumption that you have to toil in the watered fields of meditation or through pure and dedicated life that you yourself might reap the harvest of your devotion. Instead, he held up before himself the ideal which suggested, "let us try our best and leave the generations to come and enjoy and lead a life which shall be the life of ennobled mankind. It is only given to us to toil and work. Let there be no relaxation in our efforts, in our endeavour to do good to our fellow-men, to be of service to mankind, lest we incur the curse of those who should come after us.

Gentlemen, such were the ideals up to which Dharmapala lived in this mundane world of ours, and such were the ideals he preached with a zest and virility which was remarkable. In spite of advancing years and infirmities which were gathering on him, he was as buoyant and resolute as a young man. His body might grow old, decrepit, and it might even perish, but the soul in him was immortal. If our body is worn out, the soul will take another, so assures the Gita, the greatest book in the world which regulates the thought, life and conduct of man. So long as it was awake in him, he was neither advanced in years, nor weak or fragile in form. The spirit of the Lord was dominant in him. It saturated his life. It was to be found in every fibre of his being. No weapon could cut it. No fire could burn it. No water could wet or soil it. No wind could dry it. No death could extinguish it. Hevavitarana Dharmapala is still alive and is still with us.

Broadcast talk by Mr. P. N. Tagore
On Tuesday, the 1st of May, 1935.

GOOD EVENING EVERY BODY

The Hony. Treasurer of Their Majesties, Silver Jubilee Celebrations Fund, Calcutta, calling :—

Every religion on this earth of ours enjoins that the poor should be fed, children should rejoice, and the sick and the suffering should be relieved. And, it is no wonder that Their Majesties, Christian to the core, should desire that the Silver Jubilee should be celebrated throughout their world wide empire by bringing food to the hungry, joy to the children, and relief to the suffering. By contributing to the Calcutta Jubilee Celebrations Fund, you will be fulfilling to an eminent degree not only the wishes of Their Majesties, but also the dictates of humanity and religion. For the Calcutta Jubilee Celebrations Fund will be devoted *firstly*, to feeding over 30,000 of Calcutta's poor, of all communities, *secondly*, to entertain Calcutta's School children numbering over 1,25,000, *lastly*, to the relief of suffering and distress by diverting the surplus, if any, to other channels devoted to that purpose exclusively. So I appeal to you all, in the name of His Majesty, who, more than any one else has been instrumental in bringing about a truer understanding and sympathy between our Motherland and England, and between our Motherland and the other nations

of the world. And from what we know, I believe I can say without fear of contradiction, that amid the very many claims which are unceasingly made upon Their Majesties, they find time to take a real and genuine interest in our institutions. That fact alone ought to fill us with pride. There was not a soul in this ancient land of ours which did not throb with hope and courage for the future when Their Majesties were graciously pleased to visit India 24 years back, and assured us, that we were no further off from their hearts than their own people in the homeland were. The deep interest our Sovereign has always evinced for us is a matter of history, whether it is a disaster by earthquake, whether it is a havoc by flood or inundation, the heart of our Sovereign has been with us. It has been the solace of our misfortune, the hope of our miseries, and the stimulant of our ambitions. The King has set a shining example to a gazing world, not only in the good work in which His Majesty directs his kind attention but also in the charm and grace with which he does it. He has borne his vast responsibilities with fortitude and courage, and has gained not only the affections of our people, but also the admiration of the whole world. Our beloved Sovereign and his royal consort are untiring in their efforts to discharge paternal and public duties. They are ever anxious to lighten and alleviate the lot of the sick and the suffering. Their constant solicitude for the welfare of the classes, and especially of the masses, are a glorious example to generations of royal personages yet unborn.

Enthroned in our hearts, their Majesties repre-

sent the highest traditions of the past, as well as the ideals we cherish for the future.

In the name of their Majesties, in the name of our religion, in the name of humanity, indeed in the name of every thing that is sacred, I appeal to you to open your purse strings and contribute to the Celebrations Fund, which, more than any other scheme assists in the realisation of the threefold wishes of Their Majesties, to bring joys and rejoicings upto the door of the poor, the young and relief to the suffering.

To commemorate the happy occasion of the Silver Jubilee of the reign of such Sovereigns in a fitting manner is a public duty, is a national duty, is a pious duty, which I call upon my countrymen, and women, young and old of every community, to discharge to the best of his or her ability. Help us therefore, to raise as large a fund as possible and help the weak, the distressed, the diseased and the incapable. Have you yet contributed to the Celebrations Fund? If not, please come with your mite as time presses and the Jubilee week is close at hand. Kindly help the Jubilee Celebrations Committee to fulfil Their Majesties' wishes and expectations. Ladies and Gentlemen, let me offer you my Silver Jubilee Greetings.

GOOD NIGHT.

**Address delivered to the Students of the Vidyasagar
Institution—Pathuriaghata**

সমবেত সজ্জনগণ ও স্নেহাস্পদ ছাত্রবৃন্দ,

বাগীর বরপুত্রগণ যে সম্মানের অধিকারী, আমার শ্রায় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের সহিত সম্পর্কবর্জিত ব্যক্তিকে সেই সম্মান প্রদান করায়, আমার প্রতি প্রীতির এই নিদর্শনে আমি আপনাদিগকে ধন্যবাদ জ্ঞাপন করিতেছি। এরূপ অনুষ্ঠানের পৌরোহিত্য-ভার গ্রহণ করা আমার পক্ষে অনুচিত, কিন্তু এই বিদ্যালয়ের ভূতপূর্ব ছাত্র বন্ধুবর শ্রীযুক্ত বাবু ভূপেন্দ্রকৃষ্ণ ঘোষ মহাশয়ের হস্ত হইতে নিষ্কৃতি লাভের কোন উপায় করিতে না পারিয়া, এই গুরুভার গ্রহণে সম্মতি দিতে বাধ্য হইয়াছিলাম।

বালক ও যুবকগণই জাতির মেরুদণ্ড, দেশের ও সমাজের উন্নতি অধিক পরিমাণে ভবিষ্যতে তাহাদেরই উপর নির্ভর করিবে, ইহা উপলব্ধি করিয়া প্রাতঃস্মরণীয় পুণ্যশ্লোক বিদ্যাসাগর মহাশয় তাহাদের মধ্যে শিক্ষাবিস্তার করিয়া, তাহাদিগকে মানুষ করিয়া তুলিবার জন্ম আ-প্রাণ চেষ্টা করিয়া গিয়াছেন, এ কথা সকলকেই মুক্তকণ্ঠে স্বীকার করিতে হইবে। প্রধান শিক্ষক মহাশয়ের অভিভাষণ হইতে আপনারা এই বিদ্যালয় প্রতিষ্ঠার ও তাহার ক্রমোন্নতির বিবরণ অবগত হইয়াছেন। প্রধান শিক্ষক মহাশয় বিদ্যালয়ের নিজস্ব একটা বাটী প্রস্তুতের জন্ম সাধারণের সহানুভূতি প্রার্থনা করিয়াছেন। বিদ্যাসাগর মহাশয়ের শেষ ইচ্ছা পূর্ণ হওয়া বাঞ্ছনীয়। বিদ্যালয়ের কর্তৃপক্ষগণ যত্ববান হইলে তাহাদের চেষ্টা অবশ্যই সাফল্য-মণ্ডিত হইবে। প্রধান

শিক্ষক মহাশয় তাঁহার অভিভাষণে বলিয়াছেন—বিদ্যালয়ের অঙ্গীভূত ও তৎসংশ্লিষ্ট বিষয়গুলির শিক্ষাভ্যাসের মধ্যে ছাত্রগণকে মুখ্য ও ঘনিষ্ঠভাবে নিয়োজিত করিয়া রাখিলেও, বহির্জগতের শিক্ষণীয় বিষয় এবং মানবজাতির কল্যাণকর কার্যের সাধারণ জ্ঞান হইতে তাহাদিগকে বঞ্চিত রাখা হয় না। রাজনীতির আলোচনা বিন্দুমাত্র না করিয়া, প্রসঙ্গক্রমে তাহাদিগকে সুনীতিপরায়ণ হইয়া স্বদেশ ও সমাজের মঙ্গলবিধানে এবং সার্বজনীন ভ্রাতৃত্বভাবে উদ্বুদ্ধ হইতে উপদেশ দেওয়া হয়। বলা বাহুল্য, এরূপ শিক্ষা দানই বর্তমান সময়ে সর্বতোভাবে উপযুক্ত এবং এরূপ শিক্ষায় ছাত্রগণ বিশেষভাবে উপকৃত হইতে পারিবে। ভদ্রমহোদয়গণ, আজকাল আমাদের দেশের চারিদিকেই জাগরণের সাড়া পড়িয়া গিয়াছে। এই জাগরণের দিনে আমাদের ছাত্রগণের কার্যপদ্ধতি নির্ধারণ করিতে হইলে বিশেষ বিবেচনা আবশ্যক। আমরা যদি এই বিদ্যালয়ের প্রতিষ্ঠাতা, আমাদের শিক্ষাগুরু, প্রাতঃস্মরণীয় বিদ্যাসাগর মহাশয়কে সম্মুখে আদর্শ রাখিয়া কার্যক্ষেত্রে অগ্রসর হই, তাহা হইলে কার্যপদ্ধতি স্থির করিয়া লওয়া দুঃসাধ্য হইবে বলিয়া মনে হয় না। বিদ্যালয়ে কয়েকখানি ইংরাজী ও বাংলা গ্রন্থ পাঠ করিয়া ছাত্রগণ ইংরাজীতে দুইটী কথা বলিতে পারিলে কিম্বা বাংলা ভাষায় দুই একটী প্রবন্ধ লিখিতে পারিলেই যে তাহাদের শিক্ষা সম্পূর্ণ হইল তাহা আমি মনে করি না। উপযুক্ত শিক্ষালাভ করিয়া যাহাতে তাহারা কর্মী হইতে পারে তৎপ্রতি তাহাদের শিক্ষক ও অভিভাবকগণের অবহিত হওয়া একান্ত কর্তব্য। বিদ্যাসাগর মহাশয় তাঁহার বর্ণপরিচয় প্রথমভাগে আমাদের শিক্ষক সর্বপ্রথমে এই শিক্ষা দিয়া গিয়াছেন যে “কর”

অর্থাৎ কার্য্য কর—কর্ম্মী হও । ছাত্রগণকে প্রকৃত কর্ম্মী হইতে হইলে বিদ্যাসাগর মহাশয়ের ত্রায় জীবনযাপন করিতে শিক্ষা করিতে হইবে । পূর্বে আমাদের দেশে Plain living and high thinking—এই নীতিটী বিশেষভাবে অনুসৃত হইতে দেখা যাইত, কিন্তু বর্ত্তমানে ইহার বিরুদ্ধনীতির অর্থাৎ (High living and plain thinking) অত্যধিক প্রচলন দেখিতে পাওয়া যায়—বলা বাহুল্য ইহা বিশেষ দুঃখের কথা । বিদ্যাসাগর, ভূদেব মুখোপাধ্যায়, রাজনারায়ণ বসু প্রভৃতি মহা মনীষিগণ অতি সাধারণভাবে জীবনযাপন করিয়া উচ্চ চিন্তায় মনোনিবেশপূর্ব্বক করূপে দেশের ও সমাজের কল্যাণসাধনচেষ্টায় আত্মনিয়োগ করিয়া গিয়াছেন, আমাদের জাতীয় ইতিহাসের পৃষ্ঠায় তাহা স্বর্ণাক্ষরে মুদ্রিত রহিয়াছে । তাঁহাদিগকে পাশ্চাত্য সভ্যতার আলোক মুগ্ধ ও বিভ্রান্ত করিতে পারে নাই, তাঁহারা আমাদের দেশের প্রাচীন সভ্যতাকে আদর্শ করিয়া কর্ম্মক্ষেত্রে অবতীর্ণ হইয়াছিলেন বলিয়া দেশের ও সমাজের বহু কল্যাণকর কার্য্য করিয়া বরণ্য হইতে পারিয়াছিলেন । আমাদের দেশের ছাত্রগণ মাত্র পাঁচঘণ্টাকাল তাহাদের শিক্ষকগণের নিকট থাকিয়া যথাসম্ভব শিক্ষালাভ করিয়া থাকে, বাকী উনিশ ঘণ্টাকাল তাহারা তাহাদের অভিভাবকগণের সহিত অবস্থান করে, সুতরাং শিক্ষকগণ অপেক্ষা অভিভাবকগণ তাঁহাদের সন্তানগণের শিক্ষার জন্য অধিকতর দায়ী । যে সকল অভিভাবক এই গুরু দায়িত্ব এড়াইতে চাহেন, কেবলমাত্র শিক্ষকগণের উপরই তাঁহাদের সন্তানগণের শিক্ষার ভার অর্পণ করিয়া নিশ্চিন্ত হইয়া থাকিতে চাহেন, তাঁহাদের সন্তানগণ, অধিকাংশক্ষেত্রে, ভবিষ্যৎজীবনে মানুষ হইতে পারে না । সন্তানগণকে বিদ্যালয়ে পাঠাইয়া দিয়া এবং নিয়মিতভাবে

তাহাদের বেতনাদি দিলেই অভিভাবকগণের কর্তব্য শেষ হয় না। John Stuart Mill-এর নাম সর্বজন পরিচিত। পিতা James Mill-এর তত্ত্বাবধানে শিক্ষালাভ করিয়াছিলেন বলিয়াই তিনি ভাবী জীবনে সমগ্র জগতের নিকট সম্মানিত হইতে পারিয়াছিলেন। James যখন দেশের সকল অনুষ্ঠানের সহিত সঞ্চুক্ত বিচ্ছিন্ন করেন, তখন আত্মীয়স্বজন ও বন্ধু বান্ধবগণ কারণ জিজ্ঞাসা করিলে তিনি বলিয়াছিলেন সকল কর্তব্যের উপর যে কর্তব্য—অর্থাৎ আমার পুত্রের শিক্ষাভার গ্রহণ—তাহার সময় আসিয়াছে; এখন আর অণু কোন কার্যে লিপ্ত থাকা আমার পক্ষে সম্ভবপর হইবে না। আমি জানি আমাদের স্ত্রীর আশুতোষ মুখোপাধ্যায় মহাশয় হাইকোর্টের ও বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের গুরুভার সম্বন্ধে নিয়মিতভাবে তাঁহার সম্মানগণের শিক্ষার তত্ত্বাবধারণ করিতেন।

ভদ্রমহোদয়গণ, ছাত্রগণকে নানাবিষয়ের অধ্যয়নে উৎসাহ প্রদানের জন্ত বিদ্যালয়ের পুস্তকাগার হইতে পুস্তক দিবার ব্যবস্থা আছে। বলা বাহুল্য এই সুব্যবস্থায় ছাত্রগণ বিশেষভাবে উপকৃত হইবে। কিন্তু অধুনা আমাদের বঙ্গসাহিত্যক্ষেত্রে এক শ্রেণীর নাটক ও উপন্যাসের প্রবল বণ্ণা ক্রমে আমাদের দেশ ও সমাজকে সর্বনাশের পথে টানিয়া লইয়া যাইতেছে তাহা আপনারা অবশ্যই অবগত আছেন। এই অসার কুরুচিপূর্ণ উপন্যাস ও নাটক যাহাতে আমাদের কোনও পুস্তকাগারে স্থান না পায় এবং যাহাতে আমাদের শ্রুতমর্যাদা বালকগণের হস্তে পতিত হইয়া তাহাদিগকে বিকৃতমস্তিষ্ক করিয়া তুলিতে না পারে, তৎপ্রতি অভিভাবক ও শিক্ষকগণকে বিশেষ সতর্কতা অবলম্বন করিতে হইবে। মানসিক উন্নতির সহিত শারীরিক উন্নতি লাভ করিতে না পারিলে কোন জাতি জগতে উন্নত

বলিয়া পরিগণিত হইতে পারে না, ইহা সর্ববাদিসম্মত। পৃথিবীর ইতিহাসের প্রতি দৃষ্টিপাত করুন, দেখিবেন দুর্বল জাতিকে শক্তিশালী জাতি ঘৃণার চক্ষে দেখিয়া থাকে, এবং সর্বদাই তাহাদের প্রতি নানারূপ ঝকুটী করিয়া থাকে। যাহারা আমাদের দেশের ও সমাজের মেরুদণ্ড, সেই ছাত্রগণের কেবলমাত্র পড়াশুনার প্রতি দৃষ্টি রাখিলে চলিবে না, যাহাতে তাহারা স্বাস্থ্যবান হয় তৎপ্রতি দৃষ্টি রাখা কর্তব্য। আনন্দের কথা, এদিকে বিদ্যালয়ের কর্তৃপক্ষগণ বিশেষ লক্ষ্য রাখিয়া থাকেন। স্বাস্থ্যবান না হইলে ছাত্রগণ শিক্ষিত, চরিত্রবান ও হৃদয়বান হইতে পারে না, সুতরাং দেশের ও দশের কার্যে আত্মনিয়োগ করিতে সমর্থ হয় না।

অত্কার এই পারিতোষিক বিতরণী সভায় উপস্থিত থাকিবার সুযোগ পাইয়া আমি বিশেষ আনন্দিত হইয়াছি। পারিতোষিক বিতরণী সভার উদ্দেশ্য কি, তাহা প্রধানশিক্ষক মহাশয় তাঁহার অভিভাষণে অতি সুন্দরভাবে বর্ণনা করিয়াছেন; সুতরাং তাহার পুনরুক্তি করিয়া আমি আপনাদের আর সময় হরণ করিতে ইচ্ছা করি না। স্নেহাম্পদ ছাত্রগণ, আজ যাহারা পুরস্কারলাভে কৃতকার্য হইয়াছ এবং যাহারা পুরস্কারলাভে কৃতকার্য হইতে পার নাই, আমি সকলকেই সমভাবে আশীর্বাদ করি, তোমরা যেন তোমাদের এই বিদ্যালয়ের প্রতিষ্ঠাতা প্রাঃস্মরণীয় বিদ্যাসাগর মহাশয়ের আদর্শ অনুসরণ করিয়া আপন আপন জীবন গঠন করিয়া দেশের ও দশের মঙ্গলসাধনপূর্বক প্রকৃত মানুষ বলিয়া পরিচিত হইতে পার।

Address at the Prize Distribution of Mahakali Pathasala

কল্যাণীয়া ছাত্রীগণ ও সমবেত ভদ্র-মহোদয়গণ,

অনুকার এই সভায় আপনারা আমাকে সভাপতির গৌরবময় আসন প্রদান করিয়া, আমাকে সম্মানিত করিয়াছেন, সেজন্য আমি আপনাদিগকে আন্তরিক ধন্যবাদ জ্ঞাপন করিতেছি। প্রাতঃস্মরণীয়া স্বর্গীয়া মাতাজী মহারাণী তপস্বিনী আমাদের দেশের বালিকাগণকে প্রাচীন সনাতন ধর্মের আদর্শ অনুযায়ী সংশিক্ষা ও সত্বপদেশ প্রদান করিয়া ভবিষ্যৎজীবনে তাহাদিগকে সকল বিষয়ে উন্নতমুখী করিবার চেষ্টায় এই মহাকালী পাঠশালা প্রতিষ্ঠা করিয়াছিলেন। তাঁহার জীবদ্দশায় এই বিদ্যালয়টি যে যথেষ্ট উন্নতি লাভ করিয়াছিল, তাহা আপনারা সকলেই অবগত আছেন। মাতাজী তপস্বিনীর স্বর্গারোহণের পর এই প্রতিষ্ঠানটির উপর অনেক ঝড় বহিয়া যাওয়ায় ইহার অবস্থা অতীব শোচনীয় হইয়া পড়িয়াছিল; এমন কি, বিদ্যালয়টির অস্তিত্ব বিলুপ্ত হইবার উপক্রম হইয়াছিল, কিন্তু অতীব আনন্দের বিষয়, পাঠশালার বর্তমান সুযোগ্য সভাপতি মাননীয় বিচারপতি শ্রীযুক্ত মন্থনাথ মুখোপাধ্যায় মহাশয় অক্লান্ত চেষ্টা ও পরিশ্রম দ্বারা এই জাতীয় পবিত্র প্রতিষ্ঠানটিকে মৃত্যুমুখ হইতে উদ্ধার করিয়া সাধারণের ধন্যবাদার্থ ও কৃতজ্ঞতাভাজন হইয়াছেন। আশা করি তাঁহার অধিনায়কত্বে এবং বর্তমান কার্যপরিচালন সমিতির সদস্যগণের ঐকান্তিক চেষ্টা ও যত্নের ফলে মহাকালী পাঠশালা অধিকতর উন্নতির পথে অগ্রসর হইয়া ইহার প্রতিষ্ঠাত্রী

মাতাজী মহারাণীর কীর্ত্তি রক্ষা করিতে পারিবে। ভদ্র-মহোদয়গণ, বিদ্যালয়ের স্থায়ী সভাপতি মহাশয়ের সম্প্রতি যে বিপদ গিয়াছে তাহা আপনারা অবগত আছেন। তাঁহাকে ও তাঁহার পরিজনগণকে শোকসাগরে ভাসাইয়া তাঁহার একটী পুত্র অকালে মৃত্যুমুখে পতিত হইয়াছে। তাঁহার ন্যায় সদাশয় ব্যক্তির এই বিপদে আমরা সকলেই বিশেষ দুঃখিত, এবং সাধারণের পক্ষ হইতে আমি তাঁহাকে আন্তরিক সমবেদনা ও সহানুভূতি জ্ঞাপন করিতেছি। তাঁহার ও তাঁহার শোকসন্তপ্ত পরিবারবর্গের হৃদয়ে শান্তি দান করুন, ইহাই ভগবানের নিকট প্রার্থনা করি।

কন্যাকে পালন ও সম্যক শিক্ষাদান করা পিতা মাতার অবশ্য কর্তব্য কর্ম্ম। ভদ্রমহোদয়গণ, ধর্ম্মই যখন সকল মঙ্গলের মূল, তখন আমাদের দেশের বালক বালিকাগণ যাহাতে প্রথম হইতেই ধর্ম্মানুমোদিত শিক্ষালাভ করিতে পারে, তৎপ্রতি দৃষ্টি রাখা আমাদের প্রধান কর্তব্য। আমাদের দেশের উন্নতি যে সর্ব্বতোভাবে আমাদের মাতৃজাতির উপর নির্ভর করে তাহাতে সন্দেহ নাই। সেইজন্ত আমাদের সমাজের ভাবী মাতৃকুল যাহাতে সংশিক্ষা লাভ করিতে পারেন, তাহার সুব্যবস্থা করা যে আমাদের একান্ত কর্তব্য ইহা বলা নিম্প্রয়োজন। প্রাথমিক শিক্ষা দূষিত হইলে ভবিষ্যতে তাহা সংশোধন করা কষ্টসাধ্য এবং স্থলবিশেষে অসাধ্য হইয়া পড়ে। সুকোমলমতি বালিকাগণের হৃদয়ে ধর্ম্মানুমোদিত শিক্ষার বীজ রোপণ করিলে তাহার ফল যে অমৃতময় হয়, ইহা বোধ হয় সকলেই স্বীকার করিবেন। উচ্চ নীতি শিক্ষা ব্যতীত জগতে কোন জাতি শ্রেষ্ঠত্ব লাভ করিতে পারে না। আমাদের দেশের ভাবী মাতৃকুল স্কুল ও কলেজে যে শিক্ষা

লাভ করিয়া থাকেন, তাহা প্রকৃত শিক্ষা কি না সে বিষয়ে দেশের অনেকেরই যথেষ্ট সন্দেহ রহিয়াছে, কারণ অনেক সময় দেখিতে পাওয়া গিয়াছে যে, সে শিক্ষা শিক্ষার্থিনীর মস্তিষ্ক বিকৃত করিয়া দিয়াছে। ইহার প্রধান কারণ এই যে আমাদের দেশের বিদ্যালয়গুলিতে সাধারণ শিক্ষার সঙ্গে ধর্ম শিক্ষার কোন ব্যবস্থা নাই। আপনারা অবগত আছেন ইউরোপীয়দিগের বিদ্যালয়গুলিতে সর্ব প্রথমে তাহাদের ধর্মগ্রন্থ হইতে পাঠ ও তৎসম্বন্ধে আলোচনার পর বালক বালিকাগণকে সাধারণ শিক্ষা প্রদান করা হয়। প্রাথমিক শিক্ষার ফলে আমাদের মাননীয় সম্রাট পঞ্চম জর্জ বাহাদুর প্রত্যহ প্রাতে শয্যাत्याগের পর বাইবেল পাঠ ও উপাসনাদি না করিয়া অত্র কোনও কার্যে হস্তক্ষেপ করেন না। বিদ্যালয় গুলিতে ধর্মশিক্ষার ব্যবস্থা না থাকিলে বালক বালিকাগণ তাহাদের ধর্মে আস্তা স্থাপন করিতে পারে না। ভালরূপে ইংরাজি বলিতে শিখিলে কিম্বা প্রভুতত্ত্ব সম্বন্ধে মাসিক পত্রিকায় দুই একটি প্রবন্ধ লিখিতে পারিলেই যে আমাদের মাতৃজাতির শিক্ষা সম্পূর্ণ হইল তাহা নহে। যে শিক্ষায় দেবতা, ব্রাহ্মণ, গুরু, পুরোহিত, পিতৃপিতামহাদি গুরুজনগণের ও হিন্দুর আচার ব্যবহার ও ধর্মকর্মের প্রতি বালিকাগণের শ্রদ্ধা ও ভক্তি অচলা হয়, যে শিক্ষায় বালিকাগণ ভোগৈশ্বর্যের লালসার প্রতি দৃকপাত না করিয়া ত্যাগ স্বীকারে ও সহগুণে সেবাপরায়ণ হইয়া সংসারের পূর্ব গৌরব রক্ষায় ও সুখ শান্তি প্রতিষ্ঠায় যত্নবতী হয়, সেই শিক্ষাই সর্বোত্তম শিক্ষা বলিয়া আমার মনে হয়। এইরূপ শিক্ষা বিস্তার করিলে মাতাজী মহারানী এই মহাকালী পাঠশালা প্রতিষ্ঠা করিয়া আমাদের চির কৃতজ্ঞতাপাশে আবদ্ধ করিয়া গিয়াছেন।

ভদ্র মহোদয়গণ, আজকাল আমাদের দেশের চারিদিকে জাগরণের সাড়া পড়িয়া গিয়াছে। কিন্তু এই জাগরণের সঙ্গে সঙ্গে আমাদের কার্যপদ্ধতি বিশেষ বিবেচনার সহিত নির্দ্ধারণ করা উচিত। কোন জাতি বা কোন সমাজ ক্ষিপ্রগতিতে উন্নতির সোপানে আরোহণ করিতে করিতে যদি তাহার প্রাচীন সভ্যতার প্রতি আস্থাহীন হইয়া পড়ে, তাহা হইলে শুধু যে তাহার উন্নতির পথ রুদ্ধ হইবে তাহা নহে, অনেক সময় তাহার জাতিগত বৈশিষ্ট্য এমন কি অস্তিত্ব ও বিলুপ্ত হইতে পারে। আমাদের দেশের অতীত আদর্শ, অতীত নীতি, অতীত বিধি বিধানের প্রতি শ্রদ্ধাহীন হইয়া যদি আমরা কোন অজ্ঞেয় লক্ষ্যের মোহময় আত্মানে অন্ধের স্থায় ইতস্ততঃ ছুটাছুটি করিয়া বেড়াই, তাহা হইলে আমরা কখনই আমাদের দেশের বা সমাজের কল্যাণ সাধনে সমর্থ হইব না। সমাজের লক্ষ্যকে সমাজের আদর্শই অনুপ্রাণিত করিয়া থাকে, সুতরাং সামাজিক উন্নতির জন্ত প্রাচীন সভ্যতার অনুশীলন একান্ত আবশ্যক। আমাদের নৈতিক অবনতিই যে আমাদের দুর্দশার কারণ একথা কেহই অস্বীকার করিতে পারিবেন না, এবং আমাদের প্রাচীন সভ্যতা উপেক্ষা না করিয়া রীতিমত তাহার অনুশীলনই আমাদের দুর্দশা মোচনের প্রকৃষ্ট উপায় বলিয়া আমার বিশ্বাস। ভদ্র মহোদয়গণ, অনেক সময় আমরা আমাদের লক্ষ্য স্থির করিতে পারি না, কিন্তু আমরা যদি একবার ভারতের অতীত ইতিহাসের প্রতি আমাদের মনোযোগ আকর্ষণ করি, তাহা হইলে বোধ হয় লক্ষ্য স্থির করা কষ্টসাধ্য হইয়া উঠে না। ভারতবর্ষের প্রাচীন আগম, প্রাচীন পুরাণ, প্রাচীন দর্শন, প্রাচীন কাব্য, প্রাচীন ইতিহাস ইহাদের প্রত্যেকেরই সার্থকতা আছে, প্রত্যেকেরই প্রয়োজনীয়তা আছে, এবং ইহারা প্রত্যেকেই অনন্ত কালের জন্ত আমাদের উপদেষ্টা, আমাদের নেতা ও আমাদের

নিয়ন্তা হইয়া থাকিবে। সুতরাং বালিকাদিগের পাঠ্য পুস্তক নির্বাচন করিবার সময় বিশেষ সতর্কতা অবলম্বন করা আবশ্যক। যে সকল গ্রন্থ বালিকাদিগকে আমাদের দেশের গৌরবময় ইতিহাসের সহিত পরিচয় করিয়া দিয়া তাহাদিগকে উন্নতির পথে পরিচালিত করিতে সাহায্যতা করিবে, সেই সকল গ্রন্থই তাহাদের পাঠ্যরূপে নির্দিষ্ট হওয়া উচিত। বড়ই আনন্দের বিষয়, মহাকালী পাঠশালায় শিক্ষণীয় বিষয় নির্দ্ধারণে কর্তৃপক্ষ তীক্ষ্ণ দৃষ্টি রাখিয়াছেন। সনাতন ধর্মের মূলনীতি শিক্ষাদানের সঙ্গে এই বিদ্যালয়ে নানা প্রকারের সেলাই ও বুনন, জামা সেমিজ প্রভৃতি প্রস্তুত করণ, সঙ্গীত ও রন্ধন ইত্যাদি যাবতীয় আবশ্যকীয় বিষয়ই শিক্ষা দেওয়া হইয়া থাকে। আপনারা সকলেই গোথ্লে Institution-এর নাম অবগত আছেন। সেখানেও মহাকালী পাঠশালার অনুরূপ শিক্ষার ব্যবস্থা আছে, এবং ছাত্রীগণ যাহাতে প্রকৃত শিক্ষা লাভ করিয়া ভবিষ্য জীবনে আদর্শ জননী ও গৃহিণী হইয়া সমাজের ও সংসারের মঙ্গল সাধন করিতে পারে তৎপ্রতি উক্ত বিদ্যালয়ের কর্তৃপক্ষের তীক্ষ্ণ দৃষ্টি আছে।

ভদ্র-মহোদয়গণ, বর্তমানে বঙ্গ সাহিত্যক্ষেত্রে একশ্রেণীর নাটক ও উপন্যাসের প্রবল বহা প্রবাহিত দেখিয়া আমি মর্ম্মাহত হইয়াছি। এই বহার গতিরোধ করিতে না পারিলে দেশের ও সমাজের মঙ্গলের আশা কম। নাটক ও উপন্যাস মাত্রেই অপাঠ্য আমি একথা বলিতে চাহি না। তবে আজকাল ইংরাজি সাহিত্যের আদর্শে রচিত যে সকল উপন্যাস ও নাটক প্রকাশিত হইতেছে তাহা যাহাতে আমাদের মাতৃকুলের হস্তে না পড়ে, সে বিষয়ে আমাদের অবহিত হওয়া কর্তব্য। ইউরোপীয় রীতিনীতি ও প্রকৃতি আমাদের দেশের পক্ষে সম্যক্ উপযোগী নহে, একথা আমাদের পক্ষে স্মরণ রাখিতে হইবে। পূর্বে প্রত্যেক গ্রন্থ স্ব স্ব

গৃহে রামায়ণ ও মহাভারত সযত্নে ও সাদরে রক্ষা, পূজা ও পাঠ করিতেন। কিন্তু ছুঃখের বিষয় বর্তমানে অসার ও কুরুচিপূর্ণ উপন্যাস ও নাটক রামায়ণ ও মহাভারতকে বিতাড়িত করিয়া তাহাদের স্থান অধিকার করিয়াছে। ইহার ফল যে কিরূপ বিষময় হইয়া দাঁড়াইয়াছে, তাহাও কাহার অবিদিত নাই।

ভারতবর্ষের প্রাচীন সভ্যতাকে চিরদিনই বিদেশীয়গণ সম্রমের সহিত দেখিয়াছেন। কিন্তু ছুঃখের বিষয় আজ আমরা সভ্যতার নামে পাশ্চাত্যের অনুকরণে পতঙ্গের মত ভোগবহিতে আত্মাহুতি দিবার জ্ঞান ধাবিত হইতেছি! যাহারা দেশের শ্রী, যাহাদের হস্তে ভারতের ভবিষ্যৎ বংশধরগণের লালন পালন ও চরিত্র গঠনের ভার হস্ত, সেই ভারত ললনাগণ অবলার হায়ে আজীবন পর্দার অন্তরালে অবস্থান করুন, একথা আমি বলিতে চাহি না। কিন্তু গার্গী, মৈত্রেয়ী, খনা, লীলাবতী, করমিতি, মীরাবাই, পদ্মিনী, অহল্যাবাই, লক্ষ্মীবাই প্রভৃতি বিদূষী ও বীরাঙ্গনাগণের জন্মভূমি ও লীলাক্ষেত্র প্রাচীন ভারতের স্ত্রীশিক্ষার ও স্ত্রীস্বাধীনতার আদর্শের মস্তকে পদাঘাত করিয়া বিদেশীয়গণের অনুকরণে আমাদের কুল-ললনাগণকে বিলাসিতার শ্রোতে অঙ্গ ভাসাইয়া তাঁহাদের অমূল্য সম্পদ শ্লীলতায় জলাঞ্জলি দিয়া স্ত্রীশিক্ষা ও স্ত্রীস্বাধীনতার চর্চা করিতে দেখিলে, আমি বাস্তবিকই হৃদয়ে আঘাত পাইয়া থাকি। যাহারা অতীত ভারতের গৌরবময় ইতিহাস অবগত আছেন, তাঁহারা অবশ্যই জানেন যে আমাদের মাতৃকুল বিলাসিতা ও অলসতার অস্পৃশ্য ছিলেন, কিন্তু একেবারে অশিক্ষিতা ও বলহীন ছিলেন না। আমাদের বালিকাগণের নৈতিক শিক্ষার সঙ্গে তাহাদের শারীরিক ব্যায়ামের প্রতিও দৃষ্টি রাখা কর্তব্য। ভারতমহিলাগণ আপনাদিগকে যুগোপযোগিনী করিয়া গঠন করিবেন, ইহা আনন্দের কথা। কিন্তু তাঁহারা যেন মৌলিক

বৈশিষ্ট্য ত্যাগ না করেন ইহা আমার অনুরোধ, কারণ বৈশিষ্ট্য হারাইলে পথও হারাইতে হইবে, এ কথা যেন তাঁহারা বিস্মৃত না হন। তবে বিদেশীয়গণের নিকট হইতে যে আমাদের কিছুই শিক্ষণীয় নাই একথা আমি বলিতে চাহি না। তাঁহাদের নিকট হইতেও আমরা অনেক শিক্ষা লাভ করিতে পারি। যাহা উৎকৃষ্ট তাহা পাশ্চাত্য হইলেও আমাদের ধর্মবিরোধী না হইলে তাহা গ্রহণ করিতে আমাদের দ্বিধাবোধ করা উচিত নহে। আমাদের দেশে আজকাল বিদূষী বলিয়া যাহাদের অভিমান আছে, তাঁহারা রন্ধন-শালার সহিত কোনরূপ সংশ্রব রাখেন কিনা জানি না। কিন্তু ইংলণ্ডেশ্বরী রাণী মেরী স্বয়ং রন্ধন-শালার কার্য পরিদর্শন ও পরিচালন করিয়া থাকেন। মিতব্যয়িতা বিষয়ে ভূতপূর্ব জার্মান সম্রাজ্ঞীকে অনুকরণ করা যাইতে পারে। তিনি তাঁহার সংসারের অতি সামান্য জিনিষেরও অপব্যবহার করেন না। ভারতের আদর্শ অক্ষুণ্ণ রাখিয়া পাশ্চাত্য সমাজের উৎকৃষ্ট অংশটুকু গ্রহণ করিলে লাভ ভিন্ন লোকসান নাই। অতীতের লুপ্ত গরিমার চিতাভস্ম সযত্নে হৃদয়ে ধারণ করিয়া অজস্র অশ্রু বিসর্জন করিলে আমাদের দুর্গতির অবসান হইবে না, ইহা স্মরণ করিয়া ঋষিযুগের শিক্ষা সময়োপযোগী ভাবে গ্রহণ করিয়া জীবন সার্থক করিতে হইবে। অতীতের সত্য ও সুন্দরকে বর্তমানে বাস্তবে পরিণত করিতে না পারিলে আমাদের শিক্ষা সম্পূর্ণ ও পূজ্যপাদ পূর্ব পুরুষগণের মর্যাদা রক্ষা করা সম্ভব হইবে না।

প্রাতঃস্মরণীয়া মাতাজী মহারাণী তপস্বিনী মহাকালী পাঠশালায় আমাদের মৌলিক বৈশিষ্ট্য রক্ষা করিয়া আমাদের ভাবী মাতৃকুলের শারীরিক, মানসিক ও আধ্যাত্মিক উন্নতির দ্বারা অন্তর্নিহিত শক্তিকে সম্যক বিকসিত করিবার জন্য অপূর্ব শিক্ষা দানের ব্যবস্থা করিয়া দিয়া দেশের যে কি মহৎ উপকার করিয়া

গিয়াছেন, তাহা বর্ণনা করিবার সামর্থ্য আমার নাই। এই বিদ্যালয়ের আয় সাধু উদ্দেশ্যপূর্ণ প্রতিষ্ঠানের সংখ্যা আমাদের দেশে বড় বেশী নাই। বলা বাহুল্য এই শ্রেণীর প্রতিষ্ঠানের সংখ্যা দেশে যতই বৃদ্ধি পাইবে, সমাজ ও সংসারের সুখ ও শান্তি ততই দৃঢ়তর ভিত্তির উপর প্রতিষ্ঠিত হইবে।

কল্যাণীয়া ছাত্রীগণ, আজ তোমাদের এই পারিতোষিক-বিতরণ-সভায় উপস্থিত থাকিবার সুযোগ পাইয়া আমি বিশেষ আনন্দিত হইয়াছি। এবং তোমাদিগকে পারিতোষিক বিতরণ করিবার অধিকার পাইয়া আমি আমাকে ধন্য ও গৌরবান্বিত মনে করিতেছি।

মাতৃগণ, দেশের মঙ্গলামঙ্গল অনেকটা তোমাদের উপর নির্ভর করে। একথা স্মরণ রাখিও তোমাদের এই জন্মভূমি কৰ্ম, জ্ঞান ও ভক্তির পীঠস্থান। তোমাদের এই দেশেই সীতা ও সাবিত্রী, কৰ্মমতী ও মীরাবাই, খনা ও লীলাবতী, পদ্মিনী ও লক্ষ্মীবাই জন্মগ্রহণ করিয়াছিলেন, আশীর্বাদ করি তোমরা যেন পবিত্রতার অগ্নিমন্ত্রে দীক্ষিত হইয়া ভগবানের প্রতি দৃঢ় বিশ্বাস রাখিয়া তাঁহাদেরই অনুরূপ হইয়া ভারতের লুপ্ত গৌরবকে পুনরুদ্ধার করিয়া নব যুগের প্রবর্তক বলিয়া পরিচয় দিতে পার। এই বিদ্যালয়ে তোমরা সংযম, সদাচার, সেবা গুণাবলী, ধর্মসঙ্গীত, পূজা, জপ, ধ্যান, গৃহকর্ম ও নানাপ্রকার গৃহ-শিল্প সম্বন্ধে যেরূপ শিক্ষা পাইতেছ তাহাতে আমার আশা নিফল হইবে না বলিয়া আমার বিশ্বাস।

Address delivered to the Girls of the Saraswati Institute

কল্যাণীয়া ছাত্রীগণ ও সমবেত ভক্তমহোদয়গণ,

কয়েকদিন পূর্বে সরস্বতী বালিকা বিদ্যালয়ের সম্পাদক শ্রীযুক্ত কার্তিক চন্দ্র মল্লিক মহাশয় অত্যাশ্চর্য্য এই পারিতোষিক-বিতরণ-সভার সভাপতির আসন গ্রহণ করিবার জন্য আমাকে অনুরোধ করলে আমি তাঁর সে অনুরোধ প্রত্যাখ্যান করতে পারিনি! আমাদের পল্লীর এই প্রতিষ্ঠানটিতে উপস্থিত হবার সুযোগ পেয়ে আমি বিশেষ আনন্দিত হয়েছি, এবং যাঁরা আমাকে সেই সুযোগ দিয়েছেন, আমি তাঁহাদিগকে আন্তরিক ধন্যবাদ দিচ্ছি। আমাদের এই পল্লীতে বালিকাবিদ্যালয়ের বিশেষ একটা অভাব ছিল। যাঁরা অক্লান্ত পরিশ্রম দ্বারা সে অভাব পূরণ করেছেন, এবং যাঁরা পদক প্রভৃতি পুরস্কার দিয়ে এবং নানা উপায়ে বিদ্যালয়ের প্রতিষ্ঠাতৃবর্গের ও বালিকাগণের উৎসাহ বর্দ্ধন করছেন, তাঁরা সকলেই আমাদের ধন্যবাদার্থ ও কৃতজ্ঞতাভাজন। বিদ্যালয়টি বহু বাধা বিঘ্ন অতিক্রম করে যখন দশম বর্ষে উপনীত হয়েছে, তখন তার স্থায়িত্ব সম্বন্ধে, বোধ হয় সন্দিহান হবার আর কোন কারণ নেই। বর্তমান কার্য্য-নির্বাহক সভার সদস্যগণের ঐকান্তিক চেষ্টা ও যত্নের ফলে বিদ্যালয়টি ক্রমশই উন্নতির পথে অগ্রসর হবে, ইহাই আশা করি।

কন্যাকে লালন পালন করার সঙ্গে সঙ্গে তাকে যত্নের সঙ্গে লেখা-পড়া শেখানও বাপ-মায়ের কর্তব্য। একথা সর্ব্ববাদি-সম্মত যে, আমাদের মাতৃজাতির উপর আমাদের দেশের উন্নতি অনেকটা নির্ভর করে। আমাদের দেশের ভাবী মাতৃ-কুলকে হিন্দু আদর্শে গড়ে তুলতে হলে তাদের প্রাথমিক শিক্ষা

যাতে ধর্ম্মানুমোদিত হয় তার প্রতি আমাদের বিশেষ দৃষ্টি রাখতে হবে। ধর্ম্মানুমোদিত শিক্ষা না পেলে বালিকাগণের দেব-দ্বিজ, পিতামাতা প্রভৃতি গুরুজনে, হিন্দুর আচার-ব্যবহার ও ধর্ম্মকর্মে শ্রদ্ধা ও ভক্তি আসবে না। প্রাথমিক শিক্ষা যদি দূষিত হয়ে পড়ে, তাহলে ভবিষ্যতে তা সংশোধন করা এক রকম অসাধ্য হয়ে ওঠে, এবং তার ফলও যে কি রকম বিষময় হয় তা আপনারা সকলেই জানেন। সুকোমলমতি বালিকাগণকে এমন শিক্ষা দিতে হবে, যাতে তারা বিলাসের অস্পৃশ্য থাকতে পারে, এবং ভবিষ্য জীবনে আদর্শ জননী ও গৃহিণী হয়ে সমাজের ও সংসারের মঙ্গল সাধন করতে পারে।

ভদ্রমহোদয়গণ, নৈতিক শিক্ষার দ্বারা আমাদের বালিকাগণের শারীরিক ব্যায়ামের প্রতি দৃষ্টি রাখাও আমাদের কর্তব্য। আলোচ্য বর্ষের কার্যবিবরণী দেখে খুসী হলাম যে, গল্পছলে বালিকাদিগকে সময় সময় সীতা সাবিত্রীর কাহিনী শিখান হয়ে থাকে। আমাদের এই পুণ্যভূমি ভারতবর্ষের গৌরবময় ইতিহাসের সঙ্গে যাতে আমাদের বালিকাগণ পরিচিত হতে পারে, তারও ব্যবস্থা করতে হবে। আমাদের এই জন্মভূমি গাঙ্গী, মৈত্রেয়ী, খনা, পদ্মিনী, অহল্যাবাই লক্ষ্মীবাই প্রভৃতি বিদ্বষী ও বীরাজনাগণের লীলাক্ষেত্র। এই সকল বিদ্বষী ও বীরাজনার কাহিনী গল্পছলে আমাদের বালিকাগণকে শিক্ষা দিলে তারা প্রভূত উপকার লাভ করতে পারবে। শিক্ষা বিভাগের নির্দিষ্ট বিষয়গুলি, সম্পূর্ণভাবে রক্ষা করে বিদ্যালয়ের কর্তৃপক্ষ চরকা, রন্ধন, বুনন, শেলাই প্রভৃতি শিক্ষার ব্যবস্থা করেছেন, এটা বড় আনন্দের ও আশার কথা। একটা কথা এখানে বলা আমি আবশ্যক মনে করি; ২৪ ঘণ্টার মধ্যে বালিকাগণ বিদ্যালয়ে মাত্র ৫ ঘণ্টা কাল তাদের শিক্ষক ও শিক্ষয়িত্রীদের

নিকট থাকে আর বাকি ১৯ ঘণ্টা বাড়ীতে থাকে। শিক্ষক শিক্ষয়িত্রীদের অপেক্ষা অভিভাবক ও অভিভাবিকাদিগের উপরই তাঁদের বালিকাগণের শিক্ষার দায়িত্ব বেশী। বিদ্যালয়ে বালিকারা যে শিক্ষা লাভ করে, সেটা পরিপূর্ণতা লাভ করে বাড়ীতে মা-বাপের কাছে। মেয়েকে স্কুলে পাঠিয়ে দিলেই যে বাপ-মায়ের কর্তব্য শেষ হল, সেটা মনে করলে চলবে না।

কল্যাণীয়া ছাত্রীগণ, আজ তোমাদের আবৃত্তি ও সঙ্গীত শুনে আমি যে কিরূপ আনন্দ পেয়েছি তা বলতে পারি না! তোমরা যে দেশে জন্মগ্রহণ করেছ সেখানে বহু বিদুষী ও বীরাজনা জন্মগ্রহণ করেছিলেন। তোমাদের শিক্ষক ও শিক্ষয়িত্রীদের নিকট তাঁদের কাহিনী শুনে তাঁদেরই অনুরূপ হয়ে যদি তোমরা চলতে পার তবেই তোমাদের শিক্ষা সার্থক হবে, এবং ভবিষ্যতে তোমরা সংসারে ও সমাজে সুখ-শান্তি প্রতিষ্ঠা করে সাধারণের ভালবাসা, ভক্তি ও শ্রদ্ধা আকর্ষণ করতে পারবে।

Address delivered at the Baranagar Institute.

সমবেত ভক্তমহোদয়গণ,

আপনারা অতীত এই অনুষ্ঠানে আমাকে সভাপতির পদে বরণ করিয়া আমার প্রতি সম্মান প্রদর্শন করায় আমি আপনাদিগকে আন্তরিক ধন্যবাদ জ্ঞাপন করিতেছি। যে সকল মহত্বদেয় লইয়া বরাহনগর তরুণ সম্মিলনীর সদস্যগণ কার্য-ক্ষেত্রে অবতীর্ণ হইয়াছেন, তাহাতে তাঁহারা সহজেই সাধারণের দৃষ্টি ও সহানুভূতি আকর্ষণ করিতে পারিবেন বলিয়া আমার বিশ্বাস। বালকগণের শারীরিক, মানসিক ও নৈতিক উন্নতির জন্য তাহাদিগের মধ্যে সংশিক্ষা বিস্তার, রোগশয্যাপ্রাপ্তে উপবেশন করিয়া দরিদ্র ব্যাধিগ্রস্ত ব্যক্তিকে ঔষধ পথ্য প্রদান ও শুশ্রূষা, অসহায় দরিদ্র ব্যক্তিগণকে গ্রাসাচ্ছাদন ও কন্যা বিবাহে অর্থ সাহায্য দান, ইহার প্রত্যেকটাই যে প্রশংসনীয় কার্য তাহাতে সন্দেহ নাই। অবগত হইলাম এই প্রতিষ্ঠানটী Honorary Magistrate ও বরাহনগর মিউনিসিপ্যালিটির ভূতপূর্ব Chairman শ্রীযুক্ত বাবু প্রাণকৃষ্ণ সাহা ও Engineer শ্রীযুক্ত বাবু অতুলকৃষ্ণ বসুর পৃষ্ঠপোষকতায় এবং শ্রীযুক্ত বাবু হেমন্তকুমার বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় ও শ্রীযুক্ত বাবু অজিতকুমার বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়ের উত্তম ও পরিশ্রমে প্রতিষ্ঠিত হইয়াছে। ইহাদের এই অক্লান্ত পরিশ্রম, সহায়তা ও পরতুঃখকাতরতার জন্য ইহারা প্রত্যেকেই আমাদের সকলের ধন্যবাদার্থ ও কৃতজ্ঞতাজন। শ্রীযুক্ত প্রাণকৃষ্ণ বাবুর নিকট শুনিয়াছি যে স্থানীয় অধিবাসিগণের মধ্যে শিক্ষাবিস্তার উদ্দেশ্যে

বরাহনগরে ছয়টি সমিতি প্রতিষ্ঠিত হইয়াছে। ইহা অতীব আনন্দের কথা, আশা করি প্রত্যেক প্রতিষ্ঠানই উদ্দেশানুরূপ কার্য্য করিতে সমর্থ হইবে।

ভদ্র মহোদয়গণ, সুদীর্ঘ অভিভাষণে আমি আপনাদের ধৈর্য্যচ্যুতি ঘটাইতে ইচ্ছা করি না। তরুণগণ আমার বিশেষ প্রিয়, কারণ তাহারাই আমাদের দেশের ভবিষ্যৎ আশা ও ভরসার স্থল, সুতরাং আমি তাহাদিগকে দুই একটি কথা বলিয়াই আমার বক্তব্য শেষ করিব। শিশুকালে মানব যদি সংশিক্ষা লাভ করিতে না পারে, তাহা হইলে সে ভবিষ্যৎ জীবনে প্রকৃত মানুষ বলিয়া পরিচিত হইতে পারে না। বরাহনগর তরুণ সম্মিলনী এখনও শৈশবাবস্থা অতিক্রম করে নাই। দেশে অনেক সময় অনেক সভা সমিতি সহৃদেয় লইয়াই প্রতিষ্ঠিত হইয়াছে দেখিয়াছি। আবার কৰ্ম্মিগণের কৰ্ম্মপদ্ধতির দোষে সেই সভাসমিতিগুলি অকালে বিনষ্ট হইয়াছে তাহাও দেখিয়াছি। পৃথিবীর ইতিহাসের প্রতি দৃষ্টিপাত করিলে দেখিতে পাওয়া যায় যাহারা সজ্জবদ্ধ হইয়া কার্য্যক্ষেত্রে অবতীর্ণ হইয়াছেন তাহাদেরই চেষ্টা ও শ্রম সাফল্য-মণ্ডিত হইয়াছে। ভদ্রমহোদয়গণ, আপনাদের কৰ্ম্মপদ্ধতির উপর আপনাদের এই অনুষ্ঠানটির মঙ্গলামঙ্গল ও স্থায়িত্ব সম্পূর্ণ নির্ভর করিতেছে। প্রথম হইতেই সতর্কতা অবলম্বন করিলে এবং সজ্জবদ্ধ হইয়া কার্য্য করিলে এই তরুণ সম্মিলনী দীর্ঘ জীবন লাভ করিয়া জনহিতকর কার্য্য দ্বারা দেশের প্রকৃত সেবা করিতে সমর্থ হইবে বলিয়া আমি আশা করি।

ভদ্রমহোদয়গণ, প্রকৃত মানুষ হইতে হইলে সংশিক্ষার প্রয়োজন। দুই পাতা লিখিতে শিখিলে, কিংবা সভা সমিতিতে লম্বা বক্তৃতা করিতে পারিলেই যে আমরা মানুষ হইলাম তাহা নহে। যে শিক্ষায় মানবের অন্তর্নিহিত শক্তির পূর্ণ

বিকাশ হয়, যে শিক্ষায় মানব সৎ ও উদারচরিত হয়, যে শিক্ষায় মানব তাহার দেশের ও সমাজের প্রাচীন সভ্যতায় আস্থাবান হয়, সর্বোপরি যে শিক্ষায় মানব চরিত্রবান হয়, দেশে সেই শিক্ষার প্রচার ও প্রসার না হইলে মঙ্গলের আশা সুদূরপর্যন্ত বলিয়া আমার মনে হয়। আজকাল আমাদের দেশের তরুণগণ উন্নতির নামে সময় সময় এমন এক একটা অপকর্ম করিয়া বসেন যাহাতে তাঁহারা নিজেরা লজ্জিত বা ক্ষুব্ধ না হইলেও, তাঁহাদের স্বজনগণ মর্ম্মাহত হইয়া থাকেন। অনেক সময় আবার ইহাও লক্ষ্য করিয়াছি যে তরুণগণ যে ব্যবহারে অপরের প্রাণে আঘাত দিয়া থাকেন এবং আঘাত দিয়াও অনুতপ্ত হন না, সেই ব্যবহার নিজেরা অন্তরে হস্তে প্রাপ্ত হইলে ক্ষিপ্তপ্রায় হইয়া অনর্থ ঘটান! ভদ্রমহোদয়গণ, আপনাদের এই তরুণ সম্মিলনীর কর্ম্মগণকে আত্মস্তুতি বর্জন করিতে হইবে, বিলাসিতার অস্পৃশ্য হইতে হইবে, কার্যের হীনতা-জ্ঞান ও উচ্চ-নীচ-বিচার বর্জন করিতে হইবে, ধৈর্য্য-শালী ও মিষ্টভাষী হইতে হইবে, উৎপীড়ন, অপমান, লাজ্জনা এবং উপহাস অগ্নান বদনে সহ্য করিতে হইবে, নতুবা তাঁহাদের দ্বারা উদ্দেশ্যানুরূপ ফল লাভের আশা সম্ভবপর হইবে না। কর্ম্মগণের আচার-ব্যবহার, রীতি-নীতি, চাল-চলন তাঁহাদের পল্লীবাসিগণ সর্বদাই সমালোচকের দৃষ্টিতে দেখিবেন, ইহাতে বিরক্ত হইলে চলিবে না। যাহাতে তাঁহাদের আচার ব্যবহার ও চরিত্রে কোনরূপ দৌর্ব্বল্য বা শৈথিল্য পরিলক্ষিত না হয় তৎপ্রতি তাঁহাদিগকে বিশেষ লক্ষ্য রাখিতে হইবে। কর্ম্মগণকে তাঁহাদের চরিত্রের মাধুর্য্য ও কর্ম্মকুশলতার দ্বারা তাঁহাদের সমালোচকগণের চিন্তা অধিকার করিতে হইবে।

ভদ্রমহোদয়গণ, সেদিন রাত্রিতে আমি আমার বাগান-

বাটীতে ফিরিবার সময় কয়েকটি ভদ্রসন্তানকে লাঠি হস্তে রাস্তায় ঘুরিয়া বেড়াইতে দেখিয়াছিলাম। মনে হইল তাঁহারা স্বেচ্ছাসেবক, গ্রামবাসিগণকে দক্ষ্য তক্ষরের উপদ্রব হইতে রক্ষা করাই তাঁহাদের উদ্দেশ্য। এই স্বেচ্ছাসেবকগণের কার্য্য তরুণ-সম্মিলনীর অঙ্গীভূত কিনা জানি না, তবে তাঁহাদের কার্য্য যে সর্ব্বতোভাবে প্রশংসনীয় তাহাতে সন্দেহ নাই। স্বেচ্ছাসেবকগণকে এই কার্য্যে অনেক সম্মান আপন আপন জীবন বিপন্ন করিতে হয়। আশীর্বাদ করি ভগবানের মঙ্গলহস্ত যেন সর্ব্বদাই তাঁহাদিগকে বিপদের হস্ত হইতে রক্ষা করে।

স্নেহাস্পদ যুবকগণ, কোন অনিশ্চিত লক্ষ্যের আহ্বানে উন্মত্তের ঞায় চারিদিকে ছুটাছুটি করিয়া বেড়াইলে তোমরা নিজেদের সমাজের ও দেশের কল্যাণ সাধন করিতে কখনই সমর্থ হইবে না। শ্রীকৃষ্ণ, বুদ্ধদেব, শ্রীচৈতন্যদেব, ওয়াশিংটন, গারফিল্ড, এব্রাহাম লিন্কন, মহাত্মা গান্ধী প্রভৃতি কর্ম্মবীরগণের জীবনীর ও কার্য্যপ্রণালীর আলোচনা ও অনুশীলন করিয়া তাঁহাদের নির্দিষ্ট পন্থানুসারে কর্ম্মক্ষেত্রে অগ্রসর হইলে তোমরা নির্বিঘ্নে তোমাদের উদ্দেশ্যানুরূপ কার্য্য করিয়া দেশের সুসন্তান বলিয়া পরিচিত হইতে পারিবে।

ভদ্রমহোদয়গণ, আজ ছাত্র ও ছাত্রীগণের আবৃত্তি প্রতিযোগিতায় উপস্থিত থাকিবার সুযোগ পাইয়া—আমি বিশেষ আনন্দিত হইয়াছি। আবৃত্তি বড়ই শ্রুতিমধুর হইয়াছে। আমাকে অশ্রুকার এই অনুষ্ঠানে নেতৃত্ব করিবার জন্ম আহ্বান করায় আমি আপনাদিগকে পুনরায় ধন্যবাদ দিতেছি, এবং আপনাদের এই প্রতিষ্ঠানটি যাহাতে ধীরে ধীরে উন্নতির সোপানে আরোহণ করিয়া দেশের ও দেশের কল্যাণ সাধন করিতে পারে তাহার জন্ম শ্রীভগবানের চরণে প্রার্থনা করি।

**At the memorial meeting of Babu Jogendra chandra Bose
founder of the Bangabasi.**

সমবেত ভক্তমহোদয়গণ,

আজ আমরা সুপ্রসিদ্ধ সাহিত্যিক ও দেশমাতৃকার একনিষ্ঠ সেবক স্বর্গীয় যোগেন্দ্রচন্দ্র বসু মহাশয়ের স্মৃতির উদ্দেশে শ্রদ্ধাঞ্জলি প্রদানের জন্ম এখানে সমবেত হইয়াছি। সাহিত্য-চর্চা ও দেশ-সেবা এ দুয়ের কোনটাই সহিত আমার ঘনিষ্ঠ সম্বন্ধ নাই, সুতরাং যোগেন্দ্রচন্দ্রের জন্ম একজন সাহিত্যিক ও কবীর স্মৃতি-সভায় আমাকে সভাপতি মনোনীত করিয়া আপনারা আমাকে যে কিরূপ বিপন্ন করিয়াছেন, তাহা কেবলমাত্র আমিই উপলব্ধি করিতে পারিতেছি। কোনও যোগ্যতর ব্যক্তি কর্তৃক সভাপতির আসন সমলঙ্কৃত দেখিলে আমি সমধিক সুখী হইতাম, এবং আপনারাও তাঁহার নিকট হইতে যোগেন্দ্রবাবুর সাহিত্য-সাধনা ও স্বদেশ-সেবা সম্বন্ধে অনেক বিষয় অবগত হইয়া পরিতৃপ্ত হইতে পারিতেন। যাহা হউক, আমার উপর আপনারা এই সভার পৌরোহিত্যের ভার প্রদান করিয়া আমাকে সম্মানিত করিয়াছেন, সে জন্ম আমি আপনাদিগকে আমার আন্তরিক ধন্যবাদ জ্ঞাপন করিতেছি।

ভক্তমহোদয়গণ, যোগেন্দ্রচন্দ্রের স্বর্গারোহণের পর হইতে প্রতি বৎসরই তাঁহার বার্ষিক শ্রাদ্ধবাসরে আপনারা তাঁহার কর্মবহুল জীবনের আলোচনা করিয়া আসিতেছেন। সুতরাং আমার নিকট হইতে আপনাদের নূতন কোন কথা শুনিবার আছে বলিয়া মনে হয় না। মহৎ লোকদিগের জীবনী

আলোচনা দ্বারা আমরা আমাদেরকে মহত্বের পথে পরিচালিত করিতে পারি, সে জ্ঞান পুরাতন হইলেও অতি সংক্ষেপে আমি তাঁহার কর্মজীবনের দুই একটি কথা বলিয়াই আমার বক্তব্য শেষ করিব।

যোগেন্দ্রচন্দ্রের সহিত সাক্ষাৎ পরিচয় লাভের সৌভাগ্য আমার কখনও হয় নাই, এমন কি তাঁহাকে কখনও চক্ষে দেখিয়াছি বলিয়াও আমার স্মরণ হয় না। তবে তাঁহার প্রতিষ্ঠিত বঙ্গবাসী ও তাঁহার রচিত গ্রন্থাবলীর ভিতর দিয়া তাঁহাকে বুঝিবার কতকটা সুযোগ পাইয়াছি। হৃদয় না থাকিলে মানুষ জগতে কোনও কার্য্য করিতে সমর্থ হয় না। আমাদের দেশে বহু প্রতিষ্ঠানের সৃষ্টি দেখিয়াছি, আবার পরিচালকগণের আন্তরিকতার অভাবে সেগুলি অল্পকাল মধ্যেই ধ্বংসপ্রাপ্ত হইয়াছে তাহাও দেখিয়াছি। আমাদের দেশের যে সকল মনীষী সংবাদপত্রের ভিতর দিয়া দেশবাসিগণকে দেশাত্মবোধে প্রবুদ্ধ করিবার জন্য আত্মনিয়োগ করিয়া অশেষ নির্যাতন বরণ করিয়া লইয়াছিলেন, যোগেন্দ্রচন্দ্র বসু মহাশয় তাঁহাদের অন্যতম। কলেজ ছাড়িবার পর, যৌবনের প্রারম্ভেই, যোগেন্দ্রবাবু সাহিত্য-সাধনা ও স্বদেশ-সেবায় আত্মনিয়োগ করিয়াছিলেন। লোকশিক্ষার জন্য তিনি বঙ্গবাসী, হিন্দী বঙ্গবাসী, দৈনিক, জন্মভূমি ও টেলিগ্রাফ এই পাঁচখানি পত্রিকা প্রতিষ্ঠা করিয়াছিলেন, এবং কিরূপ দক্ষতার সহিত এই পত্রিকাগুলির কার্য্য পরিচালন করিয়াছিলেন, তাহা আপনারা বিশেষভাবে অবগত আছেন। আজকাল আমাদের দেশে সংবাদপত্রের সংখ্যা গণনা করিয়া উঠা কঠিন। সংবাদপত্রের জন্ম-মৃত্যুর তালিকা আমি কখনও সংগ্রহ করি নাই, তবে দেখিতে পাওয়া যায়, মাত্র কয়েকখানিই সুপ্রতিষ্ঠিত এবং

বঙ্গবাসী ইহাদের অমৃতম। অযোগ্য হস্তে কোন প্রতিষ্ঠানের পরিচালনভার অর্পিত হইলে তাহার অকালমৃত্যু অবশ্যস্বাভাবী যোগেন্দ্রচন্দ্রের অসাধারণ অধ্যবসায়, তাঁহার আন্তরিকতা এবং প্রতিষ্ঠান পরিচালনায় অশেষ যোগ্যতাই বঙ্গবাসীকে সুদৃঢ় ভিত্তির উপর প্রতিষ্ঠিত করিয়াছে। বঙ্গবাসী প্রতিষ্ঠা করিয়া যোগেন্দ্রচন্দ্র যে লেখক-সংঘ গঠন করিয়াছিলেন, তাহার তুলনা বর্তমান যুগে খুঁজিয়া পাওয়া সুকঠিন। অক্ষয়চন্দ্র সরকার, ইন্দ্রনাথ বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়, চন্দ্রনাথ বসু, কালীপ্রসন্ন ঘোষ, টি, এন, মুখোপাধ্যায়, শশধর তর্কচূড়ামণি, যাদবেশ্বর তর্করত্ন, শিবচন্দ্র বিচার্ণব, ক্ষেত্রমোহন গুপ্ত, দ্বারকানাথ গঙ্গোপাধ্যায়, দেবেন্দ্রবিজয় বসু, হরপ্রসাদ শাস্ত্রী, পণ্ডিতপ্রবর শ্রীযুক্ত পঞ্চানন তর্করত্ন, প্রভুপাদ শ্রীযুক্ত অতুলকৃষ্ণ গোস্বামী প্রভৃতি স্বধর্মপরায়ণ সাহিত্য-ধুরন্ধরগণের লেখনীপ্রসূত অপূর্ব প্রবন্ধাবলী বঙ্গবাসীকে তৎকালপ্রচলিত সংবাদপত্রগুলির মধ্যে সর্বাপেক্ষা শক্তিশালী করিয়া তুলিয়াছিল। যোগেন্দ্রচন্দ্র নিষ্ঠাবান্ হিন্দু ছিলেন। সনাতন হিন্দুধর্মের গৌরব যাহাতে ম্লান না হইয়া পড়ে, হিন্দু যাহাতে হিন্দু থাকে, তাহার জন্ত তিনি তাঁহার পত্রিকাগুলির ভিতর দিয়া প্রাণপণ চেষ্টা করিয়া ছিলেন, এবং বলা বাহুল্য তাঁহার চেষ্টা সফলও হইয়াছিল। যোগেন্দ্রচন্দ্রের সহিত মতদ্বৈধ হওয়ায় দ্বারকানাথ গঙ্গোপাধ্যায় ও শ্রীযুক্ত কৃষ্ণকুমার মিত্র বঙ্গবাসীর সংশ্রব পরিত্যাগ করিয়া সঞ্জীবনী পত্রিকা প্রতিষ্ঠা করেন।

যোগেন্দ্রচন্দ্রের দৃষ্টি ছিল তীক্ষ্ণ। দেশের কোনও আন্দোলনে কৃত্রিমতার বিন্দুমাত্র আভাস পাইলে তিনি তৎক্ষণাৎ তাহা নিবারণের জন্ত বঙ্গবাসীর স্তম্ভে ভীষণ আন্দোলন চালাইতেন। তাঁহার স্মৃতিত্র বিজ্ঞপবাণে দেশ হইতে বহু ভণ্ডামি বিতাড়িত

হইয়াছে। যোগেন্দ্রচন্দ্রের বিজ্ঞপ ও ব্যঙ্গের মধ্যে বিকৃত রুচি ও অশ্লীলতার স্থান ছিল না। তদানীন্তন রাষ্ট্রনৈতিক আন্দোলনে তাঁহার বড় একটা ভূমিকা ছিল না, আত্মনির্ভরতাই স্বদেশ-সেবার প্রকৃষ্ট পন্থা—ইহাই তাঁহার মত ছিল। স্বদেশী আন্দোলনের বহু পূর্ব হইতেই, যোগেন্দ্রচন্দ্র স্বদেশজাত শিল্প-বাণিজ্যের উন্নতি না হইলে দেশের কল্যাণ সাধন অসম্ভব এই বাণী প্রচার করিয়াছিলেন। নির্ভীক যোগেন্দ্রচন্দ্র আবশ্যক হইলে গভর্ণমেণ্টের শাসনপদ্ধতির তীব্র সমালোচনা করিতে পশ্চাৎপদ হইতেন না। সার চার্লস্ ইলিয়টের শাসনকালে গভর্ণমেণ্ট বঙ্গবাসীকে রাজদ্রোহের অপরাধে অভিযুক্ত করিলে দেশে এক ভীষণ চাঞ্চল্যের সৃষ্টি হইয়াছিল। দেশবাসী বুঝিতে পারিয়াছিল, সংবাদপত্রের শক্তি কতখানি। বঙ্গবাসীর প্রতিপত্তি ও গৌরব ক্রমশই বৃদ্ধি পাইতে লাগিল। যোগেন্দ্র চন্দ্রের বিপদ বঙ্গবাসীর পাঠকবর্গ আপনাদিগের বিপদ বলিয়া পরিগণিত করিয়াছিলেন। বঙ্গবাসী এতদূর শক্তিশালী হইয়া উঠিয়াছিল যে, সংবাদপত্র বলিলে বঙ্গবাসীকেই বুঝাইত। সুদূর পল্লীগ্রামে শিক্ষিত অশিক্ষিত উভয় সম্প্রদায়ই বঙ্গবাসী পত্রিকার প্রতীক্ষায় কিরূপ উদ্গ্রীব হইয়া থাকিতেন তাহা আমরা অনেকেরই মুখে শুনিয়াছি। শিক্ষিতদিগের মধ্যে একজন পত্রিকা পাঠ করিয়া অশিক্ষিতদিগকে সংবাদ ও প্রবন্ধাদির মর্ম বুঝাইয়া দিতেন। নিরক্ষর কৃষকদিগের মধ্যে কেহ কেহ মধ্যে মধ্যে সংবাদ লইত—খবরের কাগজ কবে আসবে। রামায়ণ মহাভারতের আয় পল্লীগ্রামে বঙ্গবাসী পত্রিকা পঠিত ও আদৃত হইত। ভদ্রমহোদয়গণ, ইহা হইতেই আপনারা বঙ্গবাসীর প্রভাব ও প্রতিপত্তি অনুমান করিতে পারেন, সুতরাং এ সম্বন্ধে আর অধিক আলোচনা নিম্প্রয়োজন।

ভদ্রমহোদয়গণ, যোগেন্দ্রচন্দ্রের দ্বিতীয় অক্ষয় কীর্ত্তি—স্মৃতিভে শাস্ত্রগ্রন্থ প্রচার। দেশবাসিগণ দেশের গৌরবময় ইতিহাস যাহাতে বিস্মৃত না হন, সেজ্জায় শাস্ত্রগ্রন্থ ব্যতীত তিনি বহু প্রাচীন বাঙ্গালা গ্রন্থ ও ভারতবর্ষ সম্বন্ধীয় বহু পুরাতন ইংরাজী গ্রন্থ প্রচার করিয়া দেশের যে মহোপকার সাধন করিয়া গিয়াছেন ভাষায় তাহা বর্ণনা করা অসম্ভব। সংবাদপত্রের গ্রন্থকগণকে উপহার প্রদান প্রথার প্রবর্তক যোগেন্দ্রচন্দ্র। বাংলা বাহুল্য, বঙ্গবাসীর অমূল্য উপহার গ্রন্থাবলী দেশবাসীকে প্রাচীন শিক্ষা, সভ্যতা ও চরিত্রগত বৈশিষ্ট্য বজায় রাখিতে যথেষ্ট সহায়তা করিয়াছে।

ভদ্রমহোদয়গণ, প্রাচীন গ্রন্থ প্রকাশক ব্যতীত তিনি সদ্ধর্ম সংস্থাপনের জন্য স্বয়ং কতকগুলি অপূর্ব গ্রন্থ রচনা করিয়া বঙ্গ সাহিত্যক্ষেত্রে অমর হইয়াছেন। তাঁহার গ্রন্থাবলী বঙ্গ-সাহিত্য ভাণ্ডারে অতুজ্জল রত্নরূপে বিরাজ করিবে। তাঁহার মডেল ভগিনী, রাজলক্ষী, বাঙ্গালী চরিত, চিনিবাস চরিতামৃত, নেড়া হরিদাস, মহীরাবণের আত্ম-কথা, কালাচাঁদ প্রভৃতি গ্রন্থসমূহের প্রত্যেক খানিই লোক-শিক্ষা-মূলক। যোগেন্দ্রচন্দ্রের গ্রন্থাবলীর আলোচনা এখানে অসম্ভব। তবে আমি এই মাত্র বলিতে পারি যে, তাঁহার গ্রন্থাবলী পাঠককে বিকৃতমস্তিষ্ক করিয়া তুলে নাই, বরং বিকৃতমস্তিষ্ক ব্যক্তিগণের উপর টনিকের ন্যায় কার্য করিয়াছে।

যোগেন্দ্রচন্দ্র অশেষগুলের আধার ছিলেন। সম্পত্তিশালী পরিবারে জন্মগ্রহণ করিলেও তিনি বিলাসী ছিলেন না। তিনি অমায়িক, ত্যাগশীল, ক্ষমাশীল ও আশ্রিতবৎসল ছিলেন। পরোপকার তাঁহার জীবনের ধর্ম ছিল। কুলিকাতায় বাস করিলেও তিনি তাঁহার পল্লীনিবাসের কথা বিস্মৃত হন নাই।

বর্দ্ধমান বেড়ুগ্রামে তাঁহার প্রতিষ্ঠিত পুষ্করিণী, বিদ্যালয়, ডাকঘর, হাট, মাঠ ইত্যাদি বহু জনহিতকর অনুষ্ঠান তাঁহার কীর্ত্তি ঘোষণা করিতেছে। ভদ্রমহোদয়গণ, যোগেন্দ্রচন্দ্রের ছায় একজন বিবিধ গুণসম্পন্ন ব্যক্তির বাৎসরিক স্মৃতিসভায় শ্রদ্ধাঞ্জলি প্রদান করা বঙ্গবাসীর অবশ্য কর্তব্য—একথা বোধ হয় বলা নিস্পয়োজন।

At the opening Ceremony of the Rangamahāla.

ভদ্রমহোদয়গণ,

বন্ধুবর রায় বাহাদুর শ্রীযুক্ত আশুতোষ ঘোষ মহাশয় ও রঙ্গ মহলের প্রতিষ্ঠাতা শ্রীযুক্ত কালিদাস গোস্বামী মহাশয় অতুল্য এই উদ্বোধনের পৌরোহিত্যের ভার গ্রহণ করিবার জন্য আমাকে বিশেষভাবে অনুরোধ করিলে আমি তাহা প্রত্যাখ্যান করিতে পারি নাই। কলিকাতার বিভিন্ন পল্লীতে দিন দিন অতি দ্রুত গতিতে ছবিঘরের সংখ্যা বাড়িয়া যাইতেছে। আমাদের এই পল্লীতে ইহার যে অভাব ছিল শ্রীযুক্ত কালিদাস বাবু তাহা পূরণ করিলেন। সম্মুখে ভাদ্র মাস। ভাদ্র মাসে কোন শুভ কার্যের উদ্বোধন করিতে নাই বলিয়া গোস্বামী মহাশয় রঙ্গমহলকে এখনও তাঁহার অভিপ্রায়ানুরূপ সাজ সজ্জায় সজ্জিত করিতে না পারিলেও অতুল শুভদিন বলিয়া এই উদ্বোধনের আয়োজন করিয়াছেন। ছবিঘরটী সর্বদা সন্মুখ করিতে যাহা কিছু বাকি রহিল তাহা তিনি শীঘ্রই সম্পূর্ণ করিবেন।

ভদ্রমহোদয়গণ, লোক শিক্ষার জন্য আমাদের দেশে যাত্রা ও কথকতার প্রচলন ছিল। যাত্রা এখনও একেবারে লোপ পায় নাই বটে, তবে কথকতা এখন আর বড় একটা শুনিতে পাওয়া যায় না। মধ্যে থিয়েটারের খুবই প্রাদুর্ভাব হইয়াছিল, কিন্তু ছায়াচিত্রের আবির্ভাবের সঙ্গে সঙ্গে থিয়েটারের প্রভাবটা কিছু কমিয়া গিয়াছে। সারারাত্রি জাগিয়া থিয়েটার দেখাটা এখন আর সাধারণে বড় পছন্দ করে না। আজকাল ছায়াচিত্র দর্শনের প্রতিই লোকের অধিক আগ্রহ দেখিতে পাওয়া যায়। যাহা আমরা এক সময় অসম্ভব বলিয়া মনে করিতাম, বিজ্ঞানের বলে

তাহা সম্ভব হইয়াছে। পঞ্চাশ বৎসর পূর্বের ছায়াচিত্রের কথা আমাদের দেশবাসী কল্পনাও করিতে পারে নাই। প্রথম ছায়াচিত্র আবির্ভাবে আমরা বিস্মিত ও মুগ্ধ হইয়াছিলাম। এখন আবার বিজ্ঞানের ক্রমোন্নতির ফলে রঙ্গীণ সবাক চিত্র জনসাধারণের কিরূপ বিস্ময় উৎপাদন করিয়াছে তাহা আপনারা অবশ্যই অবগত আছেন। রঙ্গীণ সবাক চিত্র প্রদর্শনের ব্যবস্থায় আমরা বিভিন্ন দেশের বড় বড় অভিনেতা ও অভিনেত্রীগণের অভিনয়চাতুর্য্য ও নানাস্থানের মনোমুগ্ধকর দৃশ্যাবলী দর্শনের সুযোগ পাইয়াছি ইহা কম লাভের কথা নহে। ভদ্রমহোদয়গণ, মানব সাধারণতঃ আনন্দ চায়। আমাদের ছবিঘরগুলি সাধারণের মধ্যে আনন্দ বিতরণ করিতেছে, সেজন্য তাহাদের পরিচালকবর্গ সকলেরই ধন্যবাদাই। আমাদের এই পল্লীতে শিক্ষা প্রচারের সঙ্গে জনসাধারণের চিত্তবিনোদন করিবার উদ্দেশ্যে শ্রীযুক্ত কালিদাস গোস্বামী মহাশয় রঙ্গমহল প্রতিষ্ঠা করিয়া সকলেরই ধন্যবাদাই হইলেন। আপনাদের অবগতির জন্য বলিয়া রাখি, এই ছবি ঘরে এখন নির্বাক চিত্র প্রদর্শনের ব্যবস্থা করা হইলেও অদূর ভবিষ্যতে এখানে সবাক চিত্র প্রদর্শনেরও ব্যবস্থা করা হইবে, এবং সেজন্য রঙ্গমহলের পরিচালকবর্গ এখন হইতেই তাহার আবশ্যক বন্দোবস্ত করিতেছেন। ভদ্রমহোদয়গণ, জাতি মাত্রেরই যুগযুগান্তরলব্ধ একটী বিশিষ্ট ভাব আছে। যে জাতি আপনার বৈশিষ্ট্য হারাইবে, সে জাতির অধঃপতন অনিবার্য্য। নিজের পরিচ্ছদে মানুষকে যেমন সচ্ছন্দ দেখায়, অপরের পরিচ্ছদে, সে পরিচ্ছদ যতই মূল্যবান হউক না কেন, ঠিক তেমনটী খাপ খায় না। অপরের পরিচ্ছদ মাত্র বিলাসের বস্তু হইতে পারে। যাহাদের সঙ্গে আমাদের জন্মগত ঘনিষ্ঠ সম্বন্ধ, যাহাদের সুখ-দুঃখে আমাদের সুখ-দুঃখ, তাহারাই

আমাদের মধ্যে সত্যের প্রেরণা যোগাইতে পারে, এবং সেই প্রেরণা হইতে আমরা যাহা গঠন করিব তাহাতেই দেশের মর্মে সাড়া পড়িবে, জনসাধারণের প্রাণে আনন্দের প্রস্রবণ প্রবাহিত হইবে। আনন্দের বিষয় রঙ্গমহলের পরিচালকবর্গ এই সত্য উপলব্ধি করিয়া আমাদের পৌরাণিক, ঐতিহাসিক ও সামাজিক ঘটনা অবলম্বনে ছায়াচিত্র প্রণয়ন ও প্রদর্শনের সঙ্কল্প করিয়াছেন। এই কার্যে আমাদের দেশের আরও কয়েকটি সম্প্রদায় উद्यোগী হইয়াছেন। প্রথমে প্রতিযোগিতায় বিদেশীয় ছায়াচিত্র-গুলির সমকক্ষ হইতে না পারিলেও, ক্রমশঃ চেষ্টার ও অভিজ্ঞতার ফলে আমাদের দেশজাত চিত্রগুলি সর্বাপেক্ষ সুন্দর হইবে আশা করা যায়। ভগবান উদ্যোক্তবর্গের চেষ্টা সাফল্যমণ্ডিত করুন। কিন্তু একটি বিষয়ে আমি তাঁহাদের মনোযোগ আকর্ষণ করি, ছায়াচিত্রের জন্ত ছবি তুলিবার সময় অভিনেতা ও অভিনেত্রী নির্বাচনের দিকে তীক্ষ্ণ দৃষ্টি রাখিতে হইবে। অভিনেতা ও অভিনেত্রীগণ আপন আপন ভূমিকা অভিনয়কালে অস্বাভাবিক ভাবের অবতারণা করিলে তাহা যে অতীব দৃষ্টিকটু হয় একথা বলা বাহুল্য। ইউরোপের প্রায় সকল দেশের পোষাক পরিচ্ছদ ও হাবভাব অনেকটা একইরূপ, কিন্তু আমাদের দেশে তাহা নহে। ভাবের অবতারণার সঙ্গে সাজ সজ্জার প্রতিও বিশেষ দৃষ্টি রাখা কর্তব্য। ইউরোপের কোন মহিলাকে জর্জেটের শাড়ী পরাইয়া সীতার ভূমিকা অভিনয় করিতে বলিলে তিনি অস্বাভাবিক অঙ্গভঙ্গি দ্বারা গুণাবধারণক্ষম দর্শক বৃন্দের বিরক্তির উৎপাদন করিবেন। ইউরোপের ছায়া-চিত্র প্রণয়ন অপেক্ষা ভারতীয় ছায়া-চিত্র প্রণয়ন অধিকতর কষ্টসাধ্য। ভারতের বিভিন্ন প্রদেশের পোষাক পরিচ্ছদ বিভিন্নরূপ। বাংলাদেশের কোন সামাজিক চিত্রে কোন নারী চরিত্রের

ভূমিকায় কোন পার্শী মহিলা তাঁহার দেশীয় পোষাকে সজ্জিত হইয়া অভিনয়ক্ষেত্রে অবতীর্ণ হইলে সাধারণ দর্শকবৃন্দ হয়ত তাঁহার সৌন্দর্য্যে ও পোষাকের পারিপাট্যে মুগ্ধ হইয়া যাইবেন। কিন্তু রসজ্ঞ দর্শকের চক্ষে তাহা বিসদৃশ বোধ হইবে। সেই জন্ত আমার বক্তব্য এই যে, যঁাহারা প্রকৃত artist, যঁাহাদের হস্তে art এর মর্যাদা অক্ষুণ্ণ থাকিবে, তাঁহাদের হস্তেই ছায়া চিত্রের ভারার্ণ করা কর্তব্য।

ভদ্রমহোদয়গণ, অর্থসমস্তার দিক দিয়া দেখিলে ছবিঘর প্রতিষ্ঠার একটা আবশ্যকতা আছে বলিয়া মনে হয়। ইউরোপে কিংবা আমেরিকায় এক একটা অভিনেতা বা অভিনেত্রী আপন আপন প্রতিভাবলে যথেষ্ট অর্থ উপার্জন করিয়া থাকেন। আমাদিগের দেশে যঁাহাদের মধ্যে অভিনয় করিবার শক্তি আছে, ছবিঘরের প্রতিষ্ঠাতৃগণ তাঁহাদিগকে আপন আপন প্রতিভাবলে অর্থ উপার্জনের যথেষ্ট সুযোগ দিয়া থাকেন। বলা বাহুল্য এক একটা ছবিঘর প্রতিষ্ঠার সঙ্গে বহুলোকের অল্পসমস্তার সমাধান হইয়া থাকে।

ভদ্রমহোদয়গণ, সুদীর্ঘ অভিভাষণে আমি আপনাদের বিরক্তি উৎপাদন করিব না। রঙ্গমহলের পরিচালকবর্গ আপনাদের চিত্তবিনোদনের আয়োজন করিয়াছেন। আপনারা ছায়া-চিত্র দর্শন করিয়া আনন্দ উপভোগ করুন, আর সেই সঙ্গে রঙ্গমহলের মঙ্গল কামনা করুন। বিচিত্র সাজ সজ্জায় সজ্জিত হইয়া রঙ্গমহল আজ যে পথে যাত্রা করিল, তাহার সে পথ শিব হউক, সুন্দর হউক, ইহাই আমি ভগবানের নিকট প্রার্থনা করি।

At the annual sports of the Mullick Lodge Athletic Club.

ভদ্রমহোদয়গণ,

আজ আপনাদের Athletic Club-এর বাৎসরিক অধিবেশনে আমাকে সভাপতি মনোনয়ন করায়, আমি আপনাদিগকে আন্তরিক ধন্যবাদ জ্ঞাপন করিতেছি। সৎ উদ্দেশ্য লইয়া অনেক Club প্রতিষ্ঠিত হইয়াছে দেখিয়াছি। আবার সভ্যগণের মধ্যে আত্মপ্রাধান্য প্রতিষ্ঠার আকাঙ্ক্ষা সে গুলিকে ধ্বংসের পথে লইয়া গিয়াছে তাহাও দেখিয়াছি। পল্লীর যুবক ও বালক গণের মধ্যে মেলা মেশার সুযোগ ও সুবিধা প্রদান এবং সঙ্গে সঙ্গে খেলা ধূলা লইয়া নির্দোষ আমোদ প্রমোদে সময় যাপন ও দেশের জনহিতকর অনুষ্ঠানে যথাসাধ্য সহায়তা করিবার উদ্দেশ্যেই Mullick's Lodge Athletic Club প্রতিষ্ঠিত হইয়াছে। এই Clubটী পঞ্চদশ বর্ষ বয়সে পদার্পণ করিয়াছে, ইহা কম আনন্দের কথা নহে, এবং ইহাতে Club-এর কার্য্য নির্বাহক সমিতির সদস্যগণের কার্য্যদক্ষতার পরিচয় পাওয়া যাইতেছে। আশা করি ক্লাবটী ক্রমশঃই উন্নতির পথে অগ্রসর হইবে।

ভদ্রমহোদয়গণ, শারীরিক ও মানসিক শক্তির সংমিশ্রণেই মানবের পূর্ণাঙ্গতা। জগতের ইতিহাসের প্রতি দৃষ্টিপাত করিলে দেখিতে পাওয়া যায় যে, শক্তিশালী না হইলে কোনও জাতি উন্নতিলাভ করিতে পারে না। দুর্বল জাতিকে শক্তিশালী জাতি চিরদিনই ঘৃণার চক্ষে দেখিয়া থাকে। যুবক ও বালকগণই জাতির মেরুদণ্ড, সুতরাং তাহাদের শারীরিক উন্নতির প্রতি দৃষ্টি

রাখা আমাদের অবশ্য কর্তব্য। আমরা অনেক সময় আমাদের যুবক ও বালকগণের স্বাস্থ্যের প্রতি লক্ষ্য না করিয়া কেবল পড়াশুনার জন্ত তাহাদিগকে তাড়না করিয়া থাকি। রুগ্ন শরীরে সুশিক্ষালাভ করা অসম্ভব। শরীর সুস্থ থাকিলে যুবক ও বালকগণ সহজেই অধীত বিষয় হৃদয়ঙ্গম করিতে পারে, চরিত্রবান ও হৃদয়বান হইতে পারে, দেশের ও দশের কার্যে আত্মনিয়োগ করিতে পারে। শারীরিক উন্নতি না হইলে মানসিক উন্নতি একেবারেই অসম্ভব। কলিকাতা সহরের এই অংশেই স্বর্গীয় নবগোপাল মিত্র মহাশয় জাতীয় মেলার প্রতিষ্ঠা করিয়া আমাদের দেশের বিলুপ্ত ব্যায়ামগুলির পুনঃ প্রবর্তন এবং রুগ্ন বাঙ্গালী জাতিকে বলবীৰ্য্যসম্পন্ন করিবার জন্ত যত্নবান হইয়াছিলেন। কয়েক বৎসর হইল সেই জাতীয় মেলা বন্ধ হইয়া গিয়াছে। পাশ্চাত্য রীতি, নীতি ও শিক্ষা প্রচলনের সঙ্গে আমাদের দেশে ফুটবল, ক্রিকেট, হকি, টেনিস প্রভৃতি ক্রীড়ার বহুল প্রচলন হইয়াছে। কিন্তু বড়ই দুঃখের বিষয় সেই সঙ্গে আমাদের দেশের ব্যায়ামগুলি লোপ পাইতেছে। আমাদের দেশীয় ব্যায়াম চর্চার ফলেই আমাদের একজন ভারতবাসী পৃথিবীর মধ্যে সর্ব্বশ্রেষ্ঠ শক্তিশালী পুরুষ বলিয়া সর্ব্বত্র সম্মানিত হইয়াছেন—ইহা আমাদের কম গৌরবের কথা নহে। এখানে আমি জগদ্বিখ্যাত মল্লবীর গামার কথা উল্লেখ করিতেছি—তাহা নিশ্চয়ই আপনারা বুঝিতে পারিয়াছেন। ভদ্রমহোদয়গণ, আমাদের দেশে বহুকাল পূর্বে রায়বৈঁশে খেলার প্রচলন ছিল ইহা আপনারা অবশ্যই অবগত আছেন। এই খেলা নিম্ন শ্রেণীর লোকদিগের মধ্যেই লক্ষিত হইত এবং খেলোয়াড়গণ রায়বৈঁশে যোদ্ধা বলিয়া তৎকালে পরিচিত ছিল। এক সময় তাহারা তাহাদের অপূর্ব ব্যায়াম কৌশল ও বীরোচিত ভাবভঙ্গী

দেখাইয়া দেশবাসীকে স্তম্ভিত করিয়াছিল। ঠাঁহারা আমাদের দেশের প্রাচীন কাহিনী আলোচনা করিয়াছেন, তাঁহারা এই রায়বেঁশে যোদ্ধগণের শৌর্য্য, বীর্য্য ও যুদ্ধ প্রণালীর কথা অবশ্যই অবগত আছেন। দুঃখের বিষয়, সে খেলাও ক্রমশঃই দেশ হইতে লোপ পাইতেছে।

ভদ্রমহোদয়গণ, আপনারা একথা কেহ যেন মনে না করেন যে, আমি ফুটবল, ক্রিকেট প্রভৃতি খেলার বিরোধী। তবে নিজস্ব কোনও জিনিষ বিনষ্ট হইতে দেখিলে দুঃখ হয়। তাহার উপর বর্তমানে এই দারুণ অর্থ সমস্কার দিনে অল্প ব্যয়ে দেশীয় ব্যায়াম চর্চ্চা দ্বারা যদি আমাদের যুবক ও বালকগণ স্বাস্থ্যলাভ করিতে পারে—তাহা কি বাঞ্ছনীয় নহে? Mullick's Lodge Athletic Club যে আমাদের দেশীয় ব্যায়ামগুলি একেবারে বাদ দেন নাই ইহা আনন্দের কথা। বর্তমানে দেশের যেরূপ অবস্থা তাহাতে কখন কি আপদ বিপদ আসিয়া পড়ে তাহা বলা যায় না। আমাদের যুবক ও বালকগণ যাহাতে এইরূপ আপদ বিপদে আত্মরক্ষা করিতে পারে তাহার জন্ত তাঁহাদের ব্যায়াম চর্চ্চা দ্বারা শরীর সবল করা যে একান্ত কর্তব্য তাহা বলা নিস্প্রয়োজন। Mullick's Lodge Athletic Club-এ বিষয়ে দৃষ্টি রাখিয়াছেন ইহা বিশেষ আনন্দের কথা।

ভদ্রমহোদয়গণ, খেলা ধূলার সঙ্গে ক্লাবের সদস্যগণ কতকগুলি সংকার্য্যও করিয়াছেন। মেদিনীপুর বণ্ঠায় Charity Match করিয়া রামকৃষ্ণ সেবাশ্রমে অর্থসাহায্য, পল্লীসংস্কারের জন্ত দেশবন্ধুর অস্থানে চাঁদা সংগ্রহ, খাদি প্রচারের জন্ত আচার্য্য প্রফুল্লচন্দ্র রায়কে সাহায্য প্রভৃতি সংকার্য্য দ্বারা ক্লাবের সদস্যগণ সাধারণের প্রশংসাজন ও ধন্যবাদার্থ হইয়াছেন। আমি অদ্যকার এই অনুষ্ঠানে উপস্থিত হইয়া বিশেষ সুখী

হইয়াছি। এবং আমাকে উপস্থিত থাকবার সুবিধা প্রদান করায় আমি ক্লাবের সদস্যগণকে ধন্যবাদ দিতেছ। ক্লাবটী ক্রমশই উন্নতি লাভ করুক—ইহাই ভগবানের নিকট প্রার্থনা। .

At the opening ceremony of the Gaudiya Math

সমবেত ভক্তমহোদয়গণ,

শ্রীগৌড়ীয় মঠের অধ্যক্ষগণ আমাকে অতুকার এই শুভ অনুষ্ঠানের পোরোহিত্যের ভার গ্রহণ করিবার জন্য অনুরোধ করিলে, আমি আমার অযোগ্যতা স্বরণ করিয়া, আমাকে অব্যাহতি দিবার জন্য তাঁহাদের নিকট বিশেষ অনুনয় বিনয় করিয়াছিলাম, কিন্তু তাঁহারা কিছুতেই আমার প্রতি কৃপাদৃষ্টি করেন নাই। আমি যে কিরূপ বিপন্ন, তাহা আমি স্বয়ং যেরূপ বৃত্তিতে পারিতেছি, আর কাহারও পক্ষে তাহা অনুভব করা সম্ভব নহে। কৃপাপ্রার্থীকে কৃপা প্রদর্শন না করা মঠের অধ্যক্ষগণের পক্ষে সঙ্গত হইয়াছে কিনা, তাহা আমি জানি না, আপনারা সাধারণে তাহার বিচার করিবেন। অমানীকে মান দান করাই তাঁহাদের ধর্ম, সম্ভবতঃ সেইজন্য তাঁহারা আমার ন্যায় একজন নগণ্য ব্যক্তিকে গৌরবের আসন প্রদান করিয়াছেন। এই উদারতার জন্য তাঁহাদিগকে আমার আন্তরিক ধন্যবাদ ও কৃতজ্ঞতা জ্ঞাপন করিতেছি। কোনও শাস্ত্রদর্শী বিদ্বজ্জনকে পোরোহিত্য করিতে দেখিলে আমি সমধিক সুখী হইতাম, এবং আপনারাও তাঁহার মুখ-নিঃসৃত মধুময় ভাগবতলীলা শ্রবণ করিয়া পরিতৃপ্ত ও উপকৃত হইতে পারিতেন।

ভক্তমহোদয়গণ, অতুকার এই অনুষ্ঠানে আমরা এক মহাআর অভাব বিশেষভাবে অনুভব করিতেছি। যিনি সহস্র কার্যের মধ্যেও শ্রীভগবানের আরাধনায় আত্মনিয়োগ করিয়া তাঁহার স্নমধুর প্রেমরসাস্বাদনে সমর্থ হইয়া সেই ভগবৎ প্রেম

সাধারণের মধ্যে বিতরণের সুবিধার্থে লক্ষ লক্ষ মুদ্রা ব্যয়ে শ্রীগৌড়ীয় মঠ নির্মাণ করিয়া গিয়াছেন, আমি সেই প্রেমিক, ভক্তিরঞ্জন জগবন্ধু দত্ত মহাশয়ের কথাই বলিতেছি। তিনি এই গৌড়ীয় মঠের স্তম্ভস্বরূপ ছিলেন। গত বৎসর মহোৎসবের সর্বশেষ দিনে তিনি অমর ধামে চলিয়া গিয়াছেন। তাঁহার কার্য্য শেষ হইয়াছে বলিয়াই যেন ভগবান্ তাঁহাকে তাঁহার ক্রোড়ে টানিয়া লন। তাঁহার বিয়োগে আমরা ঈকলেই ব্যথিত। আমাদের একমাত্র সাহসনা এই যে, তিনি প্রেমময় শ্রীভগবানের সুশীতল চরণতলে আশ্রয় গ্রহণ করিয়া অনন্ত শান্তি লাভ করিয়াছেন।

ভদ্রমহোদয়গণ, আপনারা অবশ্যই অবগত আছেন যে যখনই ধর্ম্মের অধঃপতন হয়, তখনই শ্রীভগবান্ ধর্ম্মসংস্থাপনের জন্ত ধরাধামে অবতীর্ণ হইয়া থাকেন। আমাদের এই ভারতভূমি একদিন পশুভাবে কলঙ্কিত দেখিয়া দয়া ও মৈত্রী প্রচার করিবার জন্ত শ্রীভগবান্ আবির্ভূত হইয়াছিলেন। তত্ত্বের প্রকৃত উপদেশ হৃদয়ঙ্গম করিতে না পারিয়া তান্ত্রিকগণ যখন মদিরা সেবনে পাশবিক কুকার্য্যে প্রকৃত ধর্ম্মকে পঙ্কিল করিয়া তুলিয়া ছিলেন, তখন আমাদের এই বাঙ্গালা দেশে, বাঙ্গালীর ঘরে, ধর্ম্মসংস্থাপনের জন্ত শ্রীভগবান্ আবার আবির্ভূত হইয়াছিলেন। কাঙালের ঠাকুর শ্রীগৌরান্দেব কাঙালের হ্রায় জীবন যাপন করিয়া কিরূপে বেদান্তবিশুদ্ধ দেশে প্রেমের বহ্নি আনয়ন করিয়া তাপিত হৃদয়ে শাস্তি, নিরাশ হৃদয়ে আশা এবং শুষ্ক ও কঠোর হৃদয়ে সরসতা ও মাধুর্য্যের সঞ্চার করিয়াছিলেন তাহা ইতিহাসের পৃষ্ঠায় স্বর্ণাক্ষরে লিখিত রহিয়াছে, সুতরাং এখানে তাহার পুনরুল্লেখ নিম্প্রয়োজন। হৃৎখের বিষয় তাঁহার প্রবর্ত্তিত মধুর বৈষ্ণবধর্ম্মের তত্ত্ব হৃদয়ঙ্গম করিতে অসমর্থ হইয়া, প্রেম ও কামের পার্থক্য সম্যক উপলব্ধি করিতে না পারিয়া, কতকগুলি স্বেচ্ছাচারী

ব্যক্তি মধুর ধর্মকে এমন কলঙ্কিত করিয়াছে যে, বৈষ্ণব সমাজের নামে শিক্ষিত সম্প্রদায়ের মনে অধুনা কেমন একটা ঘৃণা-ভাবের উদয় হইয়া থাকে। মহাপ্রভু শ্রীগৌরাঙ্গদেবের অগ্ন্যতম ভক্ত ছোট হরিদাস 'মাধবী দেবী' নাম্নী একটা পরম বৈষ্ণবীর নিকট আতপ তণ্ডুল ভিক্ষা করিয়াছিলেন বলিয়া প্রভু আর তাঁহার মুখ দর্শন করেন নাই। অন্যান্য ভক্তগণ হরিদাসের প্রতি কৃপা প্রদর্শন করিবার জন্য অনুরোধ করিলে শ্রীগৌরাঙ্গদেব বলিয়াছিলেন,—

“বৈরাগী করে প্রকৃতি সন্তাষণ।

হেরিতে না পারি আমি তাহার বদন॥”

বৈরাগীর পক্ষে প্রকৃতি সন্তাষণ মাত্র যাঁহার নিকট মহাপাপ বলিয়া বিবেচিত হইত, তাঁহার প্রবর্তিত মধুর ধর্মে “নেড়া নেড়ীর” আবির্ভাব ও যথেষ্টাচারিতা কি গভীর পরিতাপের বিষয় নহে?

ভদ্রমহোদয়গণ, বুদ্ধ, শঙ্কর, রামানুজ প্রভৃতি আচার্য্যগণের পর মহাপ্রভু শ্রীগৌরাঙ্গদেবের ভক্তগণ ভারতবর্ষে পুনরায় ধর্মপ্রচারকার্য্য আরম্ভ করিয়াছিলেন, এবং তাঁহাদের শক্তি প্রভাবে দেশবাসিগণ তৎকালে ভগবৎ ভক্তিতে অনুপ্রাণিত হইয়া উঠিয়াছিল। কিন্তু কালক্রমে প্রচার অভাবে, সুধা মধুর বৈষ্ণবধর্ম সঙ্কীর্ণ হইয়া পড়িল। তাহার উপর পবিত্রধর্মের বিকৃত অনুকরণে নানাবিধ পাপাচার সমাজ-শরীরকে রোগাক্রান্ত করিয়া তুলিয়াছিল। প্রকৃত ধর্মপ্রাণ মহাত্মারা আপন আপন আধ্যাত্মিক উন্নতির বিষয়েই যত্নশীল ছিলেন, প্রচারকার্য্যে তাঁহারা বিশেষ মনোনিবেশ করেন নাই। অধঃপতিত বৈষ্ণব ধর্মকে টানিয়া তুলিবার জন্য গৌরগতপ্রাণ পরমবৈষ্ণব কেদারনাথ দত্ত ভক্তিবিনোদ মহাশয় যে অক্লান্ত পরিশ্রম করিয়াছিলেন, তাহা কাহারও অবিদিত নাই। তাঁহার সম্পাদিত সজ্জনতোষিণী পত্রিকা ও তাঁহার রচিত জৈবধর্ম, শ্রীচৈতন্যশিক্ষামৃত প্রভৃতি বহু অমূল্যগ্রন্থ কত বিপথ-

গামীকে যে সুপথে আনয়ন করিয়াছে তাহার সংখ্যা নির্ণয় করা সুকঠিন। তিনি শেষে ঠাকুর ভক্তিবিনোদ নামে পরিচিত হইয়াছিলেন। জীবনের শেষমুহূর্ত্ত পর্য্যন্ত তিনি কিরূপে লুপ্ততীর্থ উদ্ধার ও বিশুদ্ধভাবে ধর্মপ্রচারকার্যে ব্রতী ছিলেন তাহার বিস্তৃত আলোচনা এখানে অল্প সময়ের মধ্যে সম্ভব নহে।

ভদ্রমহোদয়গণ, অমৃতবাজার পত্রিকার প্রতিষ্ঠাতা মহাত্মা শিশিরকুমার ঘোষ গৌরান্ধ্রপ্রেমে মজিয়া ও মহাপ্রভুর অনুগ্রহ লাভ করিয়া যখন দেখিলেন যে প্রচার অভাবে বৈষ্ণবধর্ম ক্রমশঃ সঙ্কীর্ণ হইয়া পড়িতেছে, তখন তিনি শ্রীশ্রীবিষ্ণুপ্রিয়া পত্রিকা ও শ্রীগৌরান্ধ্র সমাজ প্রতিষ্ঠা করিয়া বৈষ্ণবধর্ম প্রচারে যত্নবান হন। তাঁহার কার্যের বিস্তৃত আলোচনা নিম্নয়োজন, কারণ তাহা সর্বসাধারণেই অবগত আছেন। প্লেগের প্রাতুর্ভাবে, গৌরান্ধ্র সমাজের উদ্যোগে, কলিকাতায় যে মহাসঙ্কীর্ণনের মহামঙ্গলময় অনুষ্ঠান হইয়াছিল, তাহার কথা এখনও আমার কিছু কিছু স্মরণ আছে। ভক্তকণ্ঠ নির্গলিত সুধাস্রাবি হরিশ্বনি চারিদিক প্লাবিত করিয়া দিয়াছিল। ভক্ত শিশিরকুমার রচিত অমিয়-নিমাই-চরিতের অমৃত রসে আজ বিশ্বসংসার অভিষিক্ত। তাঁহার Lord Gouranga বহু বিদেশীকে মুগ্ধ করিয়া তাহাদিগকে সুধামধুর বৈষ্ণবধর্মের সুশীতল ছায়ায় আশ্রয় গ্রহণ করিতে সহায়তা করিয়াছে। ঠাকুর ভক্তিবিনোদ শিশিরকুমার সম্বন্ধে এক সভায় বক্তৃতা প্রসঙ্গে বলিয়াছিলেন,— “শ্রীগৌরান্ধ্রের প্রবর্ত্তিত ধর্মপ্রচার সম্বন্ধে শ্রীমান শিশিরকুমার ভায়া যে অতি দৃঢ় অধ্যবসায়ের সহিত ব্রতী হইয়াছেন, তাহা অনেকেই জ্ঞাত আছেন। এই গৌরান্ধ্র সমাজ তাঁহারই ঐকান্তিক যত্নের ফল। এই সমাজের দ্বারা যে প্রভুর ধর্ম প্রচারিত হইবে, ইহাতে আমার অণুমাত্র সন্দেহ নাই। বলা

বাহুল্য যে আমি ও আমার ভাই শিশিরকুমার অভিনায়া।” গোড়ীয় বৈষ্ণব সম্প্রদায় ঠাকুর ভক্তিবিনোদ ও মহাত্মা শিশিরকুমারের নিকট যে যথেষ্ট পরিমাণে স্বামী একথা সকলকেই মুক্তকণ্ঠে স্বীকার করিতে হইবে।

ভদ্রমহোদয়গণ, বড়ই আনন্দের বিষয় শ্রীগোড়ীয় মঠের সদস্যগণ মহাপ্রভুর আচরিত ও প্রচারিত মধুর বৈষ্ণবধর্মের প্রচারকার্যে আত্মনিয়োগ করিয়াছেন। শ্রীগোড়ীয় মঠের সহিত আমি ঘনিষ্ঠভাবে সংসৃষ্ট না থাকিলেও আমি মঠের কার্যাবলীর কথা অনেকদিন হইতেই শুনিয়া আসিতেছি। শ্রীগৌরান্দের জন্মভূমি নবদ্বীপ, শ্রীধাম মায়াপুরে ইহাদের মূল মঠ। ইহা ব্যতীত কলিকাতা, মাদ্রাজ, প্রয়াগ, কাশী, উড়িষ্যা, পঞ্জাব, বৃন্দাবন প্রভৃতি বহুস্থানে শাখা মঠ প্রতিষ্ঠিত আছে। এই গোড়ীয় মঠের সর্ব্বভাগী, সাধারণের মঙ্গলকামী ও আচারবান প্রচারকগণ তাঁহাদের প্রধান আচার্য্য পরম ভক্তিভাজন গোস্বামী মহারাজের শিক্ষা-দীক্ষায় শিক্ষিত হইয়া ভারতের বিভিন্ন স্থানে এবং ভারতের বাহিরেও শ্রীশ্রীগৌরান্দেবের আচরিত ও প্রচারিত প্রেম-ভক্তি-ধর্ম প্রচার করিয়া সাধারণের হৃদয়ে ধর্মবীজ বপনের সঙ্গে সঙ্গে পবিত্র চরিত্র-গঠনের সহায়তা করিতেছেন, এজন্ম তাঁহারা সকলেই আমাদের বিশেষ শ্রদ্ধার পাত্র। শ্রীগোড়ীয় মঠ যেরূপ উদ্যম ও যত্নসহকারে প্রচারকার্য্য করিতেছেন, তাহাতে আমাদের সুধামধুর বৈষ্ণব-ধর্মের আর সঙ্কীর্ণ হইয়া পড়িবার আশঙ্কা বোধ হয় নাই।

ভদ্রমহোদয়গণ, প্রচারকার্য্য নানা উপায়ে হইয়া থাকে। গ্রন্থপ্রকাশ, কীর্ত্তন, প্রসঙ্গ, পাঠ, বক্তৃতা, অভিনয় প্রভৃতির দ্বারা প্রদর্শনীও শ্রীভগবানের লীলা প্রচারের অত্যন্ত উপায়। অভিনয় ও প্রদর্শনী মানব-হৃদয়ে যে ভাব আনয়ন করিতে

পারে, আর কিছুতেই তাহা পারে না। শ্রীধাম মায়াপুরে
 আচার্য্য চন্দ্রশেখরের গৃহে মহাপ্রভুর শ্রীকৃষ্ণলীলার অভিনয়
 কথা আপনারা অবশ্যই অবগত আছেন। মহাপ্রভু গলিত-
 কুষ্ঠরোগগ্রস্ত ব্যক্তিকে হৃদয়ে ধারণ করিয়াছিলেন, ইহা বক্তৃতায়
 উল্লেখ করিলে শ্রোতৃমণ্ডলীর হৃদয়ে যে ভাবের উদয় হইবে
 তাহা চিরস্থায়ী হইবে কিনা সন্দেহ, কিন্তু মহাপ্রভু কুষ্ঠরোগগ্রস্ত
 ব্যক্তিকে আলিঙ্গন করিতেছেন ইহা অভিনয়ে কিংবা প্রদর্শনীতে
 দর্শন করিলে দর্শকের হৃদয়ে একটা চিরস্থায়ী অনির্বচনীয়
 ভাবের উদয় হইবেই। শ্রীভগবানের ভজনে প্রবৃত্তি জন্মাইবার
 জন্তু আমাদের পরম ভক্তিভাজন গোস্বামী মহারাজ অদ্যকার
 এই অনুষ্ঠানের আয়োজন করিয়া সাধারণের যে কি মহৎ
 উপকার সাধন করিয়াছেন, তাহা বর্ণনা করিবার ভাষা আমার
 নাই। আশাকরি এই “সংশিক্ষা প্রদর্শনী” বহু নাস্তিককে
 আস্তিক করিবে, বহু চরিত্রহীনকে চরিত্রবান করিবে, বহু বিকৃত
 মস্তিষ্ককে সুশিক্ষার পথে পরিচালিত করিবে। অতি জটিল
 তত্ত্বও প্রদর্শনীর যোগে সহজ বোধ্য হইয়া থাকে। গোস্বামী
 মহারাজ প্রকৃত সনাতন ধর্ম্ম প্রচার কল্পে “সংশিক্ষা প্রদর্শনীর”
 ব্যবস্থা করিয়া, সাধারণ জনসম্প্রদায়কে আত্মোন্নতির সুযোগ
 প্রদানপূর্ব্বক তাহাদিগকে কৃতজ্ঞতাপাশে আবদ্ধ করিলেন।
 এরূপ প্রদর্শনী কলিকাতায় সম্পূর্ণ নূতন হইলেও ইহার
 প্রয়োজনীয়তা সম্বন্ধে অধিক কিছু বলিবার আবশ্যক হইবে না।
 আমি পরম কারুণিক, মঙ্গলময় শ্রীভগবানের পবিত্র নাম স্মরণ
 করিয়া এই প্রদর্শনীর দ্বার উদঘাটন করিয়া সর্ব্বসাধারণকে
 প্রদর্শনী দর্শন করিবার জন্তু সনির্ব্বন্ধ অনুরোধ করিতেছি। বলা
 বাহুল্য, অদ্যকার এই শুভ অনুষ্ঠানের পৌরোহিত্যের ভারপ্রাপ্ত
 হইয়া আমি আপনাকে গৌরবান্বিত ও ধন্য জ্ঞান করিতেছি।

**At the unveiling ceremony at the residence of
Babu Mahimendra Krishna Mittra.**

ভক্তমহোদয়গণ,

একদিন সন্ধ্যার সময় শ্রীযুক্ত মহিমেন্দ্র বাবুর সহিত আমার সাক্ষাৎ হইলে তিনি আমাকে বলেন, আমার বাড়ীতে একদিন শ্রীভগবানের প্রসঙ্গ আলোচনা ও খগেন্দ্রবাবুর কীর্তন হইবে, তাহাতে আপনাকে উপস্থিত থাকিতে হইবে। ভগবৎ প্রসঙ্গ ও খগেন্দ্র বাবুর কীর্তন দুইই লোভনীয়। আমি মহিমেন্দ্র বাবুকে বলিলাম—অবশ্যই উপস্থিত থাকিব। তাহার পর নিমন্ত্রণ পত্র যখন পাইলাম তাহাতে দেখি যে আমাকে নেতৃত্ব করিতে হইবে। বলা বাহুল্য ইহাতে আমি অবাক্ হইয়া যাই। অত্য়কার এই সভায় বহু শিক্ষিত ও সারগর্ভ মহানুভবের সমাবেশ হইয়াছে। আমার স্বন্ধে গুরুভার অর্পণ করিয়া আমাকে বিপন্ন করা হইয়াছে মাত্র। কোন যোগ্যতর ব্যক্তিকে সভাপতির আসনে দেখিতে পাইলে আমি বিশেষ সুখী হইতাম এবং আপনারাও অনেক শাস্ত্রজ্ঞ কথা শুনিয়া উপকৃত ও পরিতৃপ্ত হইতে পারিতেন। যাহা হউক এই স্নেহের দান আমি প্রত্যাখ্যান করিতে পারিলাম না, এবং আমাকে সম্মানের আসন প্রদান করায় আপনাদিগকে আমার আন্তরিক ধন্যবাদ ও কৃতজ্ঞতা জানাইতেছি।

মঙ্গলময় শ্রীভগবানের প্রসঙ্গ আলোচনায় মানবের হৃদয় মধুময় ও পবিত্র হয়। সাধকগণ ভগবানের অন্তরঙ্গ—তঁাহারা নির্জনে তন্ময়চিত্তে শ্রীভগবানের আরাধনায় আত্মনিয়োগ করেন এবং ভগবানও তাঁহার সেই প্রাণের ভক্তগণকে তাঁহার শাস্তিময়

ক্রোড়ে স্থান দান করিয়া থাকেন। কিন্তু জগতে সাধকের সংখ্যা যে অতি অল্প—আমাদের জায় বিষয়ানুরক্ত ব্যক্তির সংখ্যাই অধিক। যাঁহারা ভগবৎ প্রসঙ্গ ও ভগবানের নাম কীর্তন দ্বারা আমাদের হৃদয়ে প্রেমের বীজ বহাইবার চেষ্টা করেন, তাঁহারা যে আমাদের পরম মঙ্গলাকাজক্ষী বন্ধু তাহাতে সন্দেহ নাই। আমাদের সকলেরই প্রীতিভাজন শ্রীযুক্ত মহিমেন্দ্রকৃষ্ণ মিত্র মহাশয় আজ এই মাঙ্গলিক অনুষ্ঠান করিয়া 'আমাদিগকে শ্রীভগবানের ও শ্রীনাম কীর্তন শ্রবণের সুযোগ দিয়া কৃতজ্ঞতা পাশে আবদ্ধ করিয়াছেন। তিনি আমাদের সকলের ধন্যবাদার্থ।

ভদ্রমহোদয়গণ, মানুষের মনে নানা খেয়ালের আবির্ভাব হইতে দেখা যায়। মহিমেন্দ্র বাবুর খেয়াল যে সর্বতোভাবে প্রশংসনীয় ইহা বলা নিস্প্রয়োজন। তিনি যে মহৎ বংশে জন্ম গ্রহণ করিয়াছেন তাহাতে তাঁহার ধর্ম্মানুরাগ হওয়াটা স্বাভাবিক। আপনাদের অবগতির জন্য সংক্ষেপে আমি তাঁহার বংশ পরিচয় প্রদান করিতেছি। মিত্রবংশের আদিম বাসস্থান এড়িয়াদহ। প্রায় পৌনে তিনশত বৎসর পূর্বে এই বংশের জগন্নাথ প্রসাদ মিত্র মহাশয় ১৬৬০ খৃষ্টাব্দে কলিকাতায় দর্জিপাড়ায় আসিয়া বাস করেন। আপনারা দুর্গাচরণ মিত্রের নাম অবগত আছেন। তিনি ১৭১০ খৃষ্টাব্দে এই বংশে জন্মগ্রহণ করেন এবং স্বীয় অধ্যবসায় দ্বারা যথেষ্ট উন্নতি লাভ করেন এবং শেষে ঈষ্ট ইণ্ডিয়া কোম্পানির আবগারী ও লবণ বিভাগের দেওয়ানীপদ প্রাপ্ত হন। কায়স্থ সমাজে ইনি নববঙ্গকুল প্রতিষ্ঠা করিয়া সমাজের শীর্ষস্থান অধিকার করেন। তিনি বহু সদানুষ্ঠানের উদ্যোগ ও ধর্ম্মপ্রাণ ছিলেন। ভক্ত রামপ্রসাদ এই দুর্গাচরণ মিত্র মহাশয়ের অধীনে কার্য্য করিতেন। মিত্র মহাশয় একদিন রামপ্রসাদের খাতা পরীক্ষা করিবার সময় একস্থানে—

আমায় দেও মা তবিলদারী

আমি নিমক হারাম্ নই শঙ্করী

—এই গানটি লিখিত দেখিয়া এবং রামপ্রসাদের ধর্মভাব লক্ষ্য করিয়া তাঁহাকে মাসিক বৃত্তি দানের ব্যবস্থা করিয়া ধর্মচর্চার সুবিধা করিয়া দিয়াছিলেন। দুর্গাচরণের ভ্রাতুষ্পুত্র নীলমণি মিত্র মহাশয়ের নামও আপনাদের পরিচিত। তিনি ১৭৩২ খৃষ্টাব্দে জন্ম গ্রহণ করেন। ইনি ঈষ্ট ইণ্ডিয়া কোম্পানির একজন মুৎসুদী ছিলেন। ধর্মপ্রাণ, ত্রায়নিষ্ঠ ও সত্যবাদী বলিয়া তৎকালে সমাজে ইহার যথেষ্ট খ্যাতি ও প্রতিপত্তি ছিল। মহিমেন্দ্র বাবুর পিতামহ জীবনকৃষ্ণ মিত্র মহাশয় সাধু পুরুষ ছিলেন। স্বহস্তে জগদ্ধাত্রী প্রতিমার সাজসজ্জা করিবার সময় তাঁহার মনে এমন এক অপূর্ব ধর্মভাবের আবির্ভাব হয় যে, তিনি সংসারে সকল বন্ধন ছিন্ন করিয়া পরিবারবর্গের অজ্ঞাতে সংসার ত্যাগ করিয়া সন্ন্যাস গ্রহণ করেন। ধর্মপরায়ণ পূর্ব পুরুষগণের প্রকৃতি যে মহিমেন্দ্র বাবুর ভিতর পরিলক্ষিত হইবে এবং বংশের ধারা রক্ষা করিবার জন্ত মহিমেন্দ্র বাবু যে ভগবৎ প্রসঙ্গ ও শ্রীনাম কীর্তনের আয়োজন করিবেন ইহাতে আশ্চর্য্য কি? বর্তমানে এই মিত্র বংশের যথেষ্ট খ্যাতি ও প্রতিপত্তি লক্ষিত হইয়া থাকে। বড়লাট বাহাদুরের Executive Council এর আইন সদস্য মাননীয় স্যার ব্রজেন্দ্রলাল মিত্র, বঙ্গদেশের ভূতপূর্ব Accountant General শ্রীযুক্ত জ্যোতিশচন্দ্র মিত্র প্রভৃতি মনীষিগণ এই মিত্র বংশে জন্মগ্রহণ করেন।

ভক্ত মহোদয়গণ, মহিমেন্দ্র বাবুর জীবনের একটা অলৌকিক ঘটনায় অত্ধকার এই উৎসবানুষ্ঠানের আয়োজন। মহিমেন্দ্র বাবুর পূজনীয়া মাতাঠাকুরাণী পুত্রের নিকট তাঁহার কুলদেবতা শ্রীশ্রী৭রাজরাজেশ্বর জীউর দোলযাত্রা ব্রত গ্রহণের ইচ্ছা প্রকাশ

করেন। নানাকারণে পুত্র জননীর ইচ্ছা পূর্ণ করিতে পারেন নাই। তাঁহার সংসারে নানা ঝড় বহিয়া যায় এবং তাঁহার সহধর্মিণী বিমলাসুন্দরী স্বর্গগতা হন। স্ত্রী-বিয়োগের প্রায় দুই মাস কাল পরে একদিন মহিমেন্দ্র বাবু এক অপূর্ব স্বপ্ন দর্শন করেন। স্বপ্নে তিনি এক খরশ্রোতা নদী তীরে একটা মনোরম উদ্যান মধ্যে, এক বিষ্ণুমন্দিরের সিঁড়ির উপর তাঁহার সহধর্মিণী বিমলাসুন্দরীকে দেখিতে পান। স্বামীকে দর্শন করিয়া সাধ্বী তাঁহার চরণে প্রণাম করিয়া বলেন—মায়ের একান্ত ইচ্ছা তিনি দোল যাত্রার ব্রত গ্রহণ করেন, তুমি তাঁহার মনোভিলাষ পূর্ণ কর। কথা কয়টি বলিয়াই বিমলাসুন্দরী অন্তর্হিতা হন। এই অশরীরী আত্মার প্রেরণায় মহিমেন্দ্র বাবু তাঁহার পূজনীয়া জননীর প্রাণের ইচ্ছা পূর্ণ করেন। গত ফাল্গুন মাসে মহিমেন্দ্র বাবুর মাতৃদেবী কর্তৃক তাঁহার কুলদেবতা শ্রীশ্রী৩রাজরাজেশ্বর জীউর দোলযাত্রার ব্রত মহাসমারোহে উদ্‌যাপন হইয়া গিয়াছে।

ভদ্র মহোদয়গণ, লক্ষ্মীস্বরূপিণী পুত্রবধূ বিমলাসুন্দরীর গুণে তাঁহার পূজনীয়া শাশুড়ী ঠাকুরাণী মুগ্ধা ছিলেন। বিমলাসুন্দরী আদর্শ কন্যা, আদর্শ ভগিনী আদর্শ সহধর্মিণী, আদর্শ জননী ও আদর্শ গৃহিণী ছিলেন। স্বীয় মধুর ব্যবহারে তিনি তাঁহার আত্মীয় স্বজনগণকে মুগ্ধ করিয়াছিলেন। তিনি অন্নপূর্ণার ন্যায় মুক্তহস্তে অন্ন দান করিতেন। অভাবগ্রস্ত আত্মীয়গণ তাঁহার নিকট উপস্থিত হইলে তিনি অন্নানবদনে স্বীয় গাত্র হইতে অলঙ্কার উন্মোচন করিয়া তাঁহাদিগকে দান করিতেন। দেবদ্বিজে ও গুরুজনগণে ভক্তি, পরোপকারিতা ও ধর্ম্যপরায়ণতা প্রভৃতি সদগুণে বিমলাসুন্দরী বিভূষিতা ছিলেন। বলা বাহুল্য, মহিমেন্দ্র বাবু এরূপ সহধর্মিণী লাভ করিয়া ধন্য হইয়াছেন। বিমলাসুন্দরী তাঁহার সংসারে যে কীৰ্ত্তি রাখিয়া গিয়াছেন,

তাহা চিরকাল অক্ষয় হইয়া থাকিবে। কিন্তু মহিমেন্দ্র বাবুর মাতা ঠাকুরাণী বধূর একখানি তৈল চিত্র প্রতিষ্ঠার ইচ্ছা প্রকাশ করিলে, মহিমেন্দ্র বাবু সেই চিত্র প্রতিষ্ঠার সঙ্গে অদ্ভুত ভগবৎ-প্রসঙ্গ ও শ্রীনাম সঙ্কীৰ্তনের আয়োজন করিয়াছেন। বিমলা-সুন্দরীর ন্যায় পুত-চরিত্রা, সাধ্বী, গুণবতী মহিলার তৈল-চিত্রের আবরণ উন্মোচন করিবার অধিকার পাইয়া আমি আমাকে ধন্য মনে করিতেছি। ভদ্রমহোদয়গণ, আমি আর আপনাদের সময় হরণ করিতে ইচ্ছা করি না—আসুন ধর্মপ্রসঙ্গ ও কীর্তন শ্রবণ করিয়া এখন আমরা পরিতৃপ্ত হই।
